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ABSTRACT

This 1993 yearbook presents 20 papers and summaries of the dissertation award winner "Content Literacy in High School Social Studies: A Focus on One Teacher's Beliefs and Decisions about Classroom Discussions" (E. G. Sturtevant) and the thesis award winner "Effects of Direct Instruction of Story Grammar on Story Writing and Reading Comprehension of Elementary School Learning Disabled Students" (R. E. Leaman). Papers in the Inquiries in College and Adult Literacy Instruction section are: "Fads or Substantive Changes in the Field of Adult Literacy" (J. S. Richardson); "School Experiences of Adults Participating in Volunteer Literacy Programs" (M. D. Siedow and B. J. Fox); "Effects of a Precollege Reading Course on the Academic Self-Esteem of Urban College Students" (J. Lewis); "Evaluating Reader-Response Journals: A Coding System" (C. Clery and A. Smith); and "Predicting Nelson-Denny Scores from the SAT" (C. Gillespie). Papers in the Inquiries in Literacy Instruction in Clinics and Classrooms section are: "University Reading Clinics: Changing Focus for Changing Needs" (D. D. Allen and others); "Expanding the Use of Picture Storybooks with Older Readers" (D. G. McAllister); "Impact of Purpose-Setting Questions on Children's Book Discussions" (M. W. Matthews and E. W. Paille); "'...So Write It Out': Seizing the Power of Personal Journal Writing in Affirming African-American Student Identities" (N. B. Cothern and B. G. Lyman); "Affective Concerns and Reading" (J. Shapiro); "Are Content Area Reading Practices Keeping Pace with Research?" (M. K. Gillis and others); "Relationships among Field Dependence-Independence, Reading Instruction, and Reading Achievement" (J. W. McCutcheon and W. E. Smith); and "Action Research: Classroom Teachers' Perceptions of Its Impact on the Teaching of Reading" (M. A. Gray-Schlegel and J. Brady Matanzo). Papers in the Inquiries in Teacher Education section are: "The Process and Promise of Portfolio Assessment in Teacher Education Programs: Impact on Students' Knowledge, Beliefs, and Practices" (M. P. Ford); "Activities for Restructuring Reading Education Courses for Preservice Teachers" (D. Reinking and others); "Utilizing Literature as a Vehicle for Teaching about Multicultural Education in a Reading Methods Course" (L. C. Smith and others); "Reflective Practice Confronts the Complexities of Teaching Reading" (B. J. Walker and C. Ramseth); "Value-Added Benefits for Reforming a Remedial Reading Methodology Course with Videodisc and Hypercard Technology" (V. J. Risko and others); "First Steps in Teaching Reading: A Descriptive Study" (A. M. Frager); and "The Impact of Coursework in Tests and Measurements on Assessment Literacy" (J. L. Johns and P. VanLeirsburg). (RS)

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# INQUIRIES IN LITERACY LEARNING AND INSTRUCTION

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## The Fifteenth Yearbook of the College Reading Association 1993

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# INQUIRIES IN LITERACY LEARNING AND INSTRUCTION

## The Fifteenth Yearbook
## of
## The College Reading Association
## 1993

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# EDITORIAL

# Looking Back, Moving Ahead

TIM RASINSKI

NANCY PADAK

This volume of the CRA Yearbook marks the end of our four-year editorial tenure. In the four volumes that we have edited, the first three with our colleague John Logan, we have seen a marked increase in interest in the Yearbook as a viable publishing option for CRA members indicated by an increase in the number of papers submitted for publication. In our first year, we received 25 submissions. For the current volume, 43 papers were submitted, a 72% increase over that initial year. Moreover, the Yearbook is becoming recognized as an important contributor to scholarly research in literacy education. We are seeing the Yearbook cited in a variety of prestigious journals. This is a tribute not only to the Yearbook itself but also to the quality of scholarship of the contributors.

We believe the Yearbook has a bright future. In order to ensure that future, we recommend the following:

1. Presenters at the annual conference need to submit their papers for consideration. Although the 43 submissions this year were a record, they still represent a fraction of the presentations made. More submissions means a greater likelihood of rejection for authors, but it also means a higher-quality publication.
2. The editors need to work to continually improve the journal. They can do this by encouraging submissions; ensuring a rigorous review process with formative feedback to authors; selecting the best and most significant manuscripts; and ensuring clarity, readability, and conformation to conventions of style.

We think the incoming editors, Wayne Linek and Betty Sturtevant, have the qualities to move the Yearbook in a positive direction. We wish them our best. We also have many people to thank for their contributions to the Yearbook during our editorial tenure. In no particular order, we acknowledge and thank our reviewers for their timely and supportive reviews of manuscripts; our contributors for the time and care they invested in their papers and their dedication to CRA; Rich Vacca and Estill Alexander, Publication Committee chairpersons, who supported the renewal and growth of the Yearbook; the various CRA Boards with whom we have worked for their encouragement and support; Karen Brothers, typist extraordinaire; Beth Dawson, Gay Fawcett, and Jennifer Fike, editorial assistants; JaNoel Lowe, typesetter and publications consultant; and Norm Stahl for being Norm.

We found editing the Yearbook to be a stimulating and professionally rewarding job. We made new friends and developed professional relationships with many CRA colleagues. We learned more about APA format than we ever wanted to know. We also found our experience a good foundation for other editorships. We highly recommend it to our CRA colleagues.

In closing, we share the last few sentences of E.B. White's classic, *Charlotte's Web*, as a tribute to contributors, reviewers, and readers of the CRA Yearbook: "She was in a class by herself. It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer." Thanks, friends.

# DISSERTATION AWARD

# Content Literacy in High School Social Studies: A Focus on One Teacher's Beliefs and Decisions About Classroom Discussions

ELIZABETH G. STURTEVANT
*Marymount University*

Literacy educators for many years have advocated that secondary content teachers encourage classroom discussion in which students interact with one another and their teacher and critically analyze ideas presented in textbooks (Alvermann & Hayes, 1989; Moore, Readence, & Rickelman, 1983; Vacca & Vacca, 1989). Alvermann, O'Brien, and Dillon (1990) distinguish this type of "open-forum" discussion from the "lecture/recitation" and "recitation"; the latter are defined as consisting of more teacher-talk and teacher-directed questions having only one "right" answer.

Although lecture/recitations and recitations have been widely criticized for encouraging lower-order thinking and student passivity (Brozo & Simpson, 1991), both large- and small-scale studies have found this type of interaction predominant in American middle school and high school classrooms (Alvermann, O'Brien, & Dillon, 1990; Goodlad, 1984; McNeil, 1986). Teacher educators who try to convince secondary teachers to modify their instruction to include more open-forum discussion frequently report resistance to change (Alvermann & Hayes, 1989; O'Brien, 1988), although little is known about how and why secondary teachers actually choose their instructional practices (Alvermann & Moore, 1991).

The goal of this study was to explore how one experienced high school history teacher made day-to-day decisions about conducting classroom discussions. Specifically, my purpose was to illuminate relationships among contextual influences, student beliefs, and teacher beliefs that affected classroom discussions. This study is part of a larger qualitative dissertation study that explored how and why reading and writing were used in two high school social studies classes (Sturtevant, 1992). Social studies teachers were selected, in part, because while social studies content may appear to lend itself to open-forum discussions, social studies teachers have been often criticized for relying heavily on lecture-style instruction (National Science Foundation, 1979; Newmann, 1988).

## METHOD

Data for the larger study were collected from these sources: 20 continuous days of classroom observations in the classes of two 11th grade U.S. History teachers in the same school; extensive interviews with teachers, students, and supervisors; and related classroom and district documents. Classroom activities were observed continuously in order to provide a clear view of how events from one day might relate to those of the next. Data were collected and analyzed according to qualitative case study methodology (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Merriam, 1988), using the constant comparative method and domain analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The study was conducted in an urban, culturally diverse high school near Washington, D.C. All names used in this report are pseudonyms but reflect the gender and ethnicity of the participants.

The teacher who is the focus of this report, Mr. Smith, had been teaching social studies in the same high school for over 25 years. The principal and department chair both identified him as a good teacher. Mr. Smith had a warm, open relationship with his students, who came from widely varied economic, ethnic, and language backgrounds. The class included 7 students born in the United States and 11 students who had immigrated from eight different foreign countries.

## RESULTS

The study as a whole provided support for the development of a model illustrating influences upon classroom instruction (see Figure 1). Instruction was found to be influenced by teacher factors, student factors, and the larger context in which the classes existed. This report will describe ways these influences interacted to affect the types of discussions that occurred in Mr. Smith's class.

### Mr. Smith's Instructional Beliefs

As shown on the left side of Figure 1, teachers' beliefs and knowledge, formed over many years through their personal experiences, were found to influence their instructional decisions and actions. During the interviews, Mr. Smith discussed several beliefs about teaching and learning history. He said that the best way to learn history was to "sit around and discuss it... listen to what I have to say, but also listen to [students'] questions... agree with me, disagree with me... I like a good argument." This statement describes an open-forum discussion as defined by Alvermann and her colleagues (1990). However, Mr. Smith also supported lecturing and other forms of social studies instruction, when he later said: "[Lecturing is] important... depending on how you do it... but there should be more group work and simulations—it has to be a

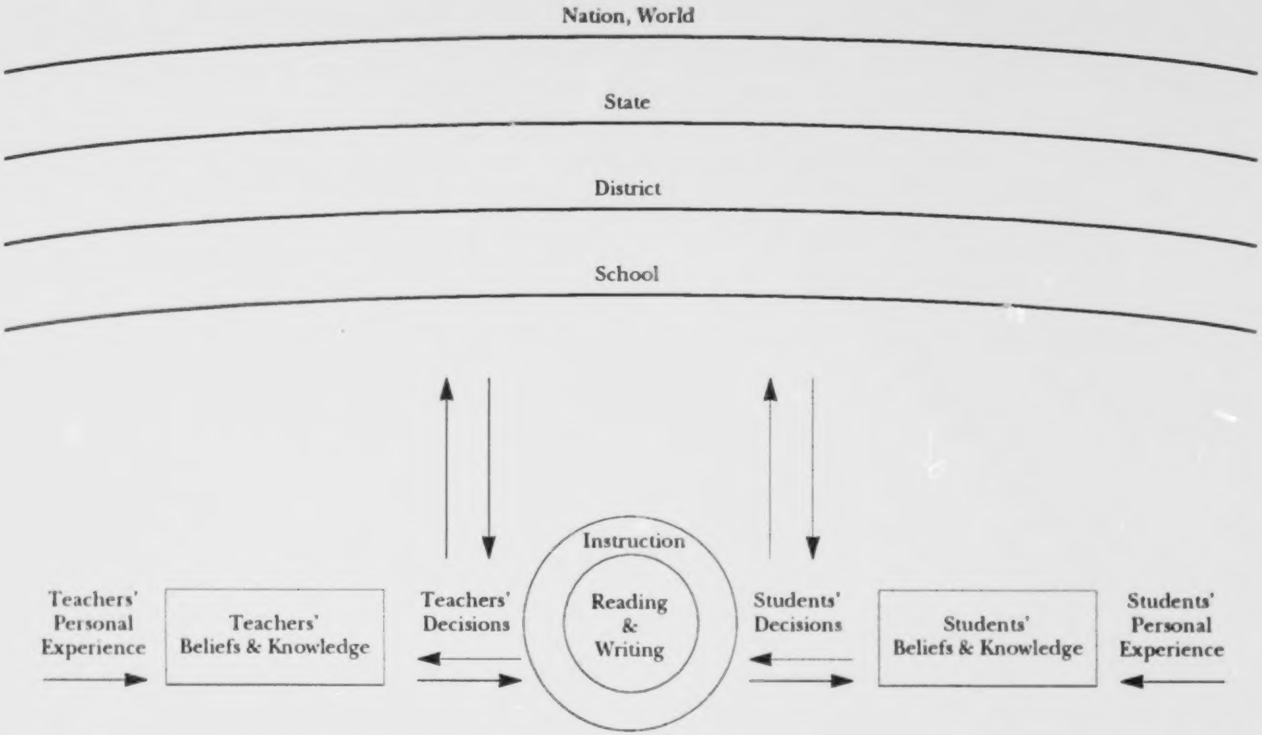
Nation, World
State
District
School
Instruction
Teachers' Personal Experience
Teachers' Beliefs & Knowledge
Teachers' Decisions
Reading & Writing
Students' Decisions
Students' Beliefs & Knowledge
Students' Personal Experience

Figure 1. Influences affecting reading and writing within the classroom instruction (Sturtevant, 1992, p. 147)

combination." Although these two statements appear somewhat contradictory, Mr. Smith's instruction reflected both ideas. As will be illustrated in the examples that follow, Mr. Smith often changed from a recitation to an open-forum discussion within the same class period and once allowed an entire class period for an unplanned open-forum discussion.

In addition to his beliefs about classroom interactions, Mr. Smith expressed beliefs about content coverage and sequence—first, that it was best to teach history chronologically so that students would have the background to understand each successive time period and second, that it was important to "get to the 1980s" so students would have an understanding of recent events. Both of these beliefs also appeared to strongly influence Mr. Smith's instruction.

### Discussions in Mr. Smith's Class

Over the course of the 20-day observation period, whole-class lecture/recitations, recitations, and discussion constituted 38% of the instructional time in Mr. Smith's class. This section will describe this instruction with 4 samples from classroom observations. Most of these whole-class classroom interactions were lecture/recitations, during which Mr. Smith required students to copy an outline of factual information from the chalkboard or overhead transparency and fill in the details as he moved the class through the content. For example:

**Mr. Smith:** Before the 1930s, what if you were too old to work?
**Student:** Got fired.
**Mr. Smith:** What was the new program?
**Student:** Social security.
**Mr. Smith:** What is it?
**Student:** Money they give to old people.
**Mr. Smith:** How do they get the money?
**Student:** Taxes.
**Mr. Smith:** [explained the social security system]

Mr. Smith did, however, encourage a more open discussion during part of most classes by purposefully switching to a "let's pretend" scenario. For example, during a class on Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb:

**Mr. Smith:** Pretend you are the president of the United States, Sally, and John is your military adviser. John, what advice would you give?
**Andrew:** Nuke-em.
**John:** Go home, sleep.
**Mr. Smith:** No, you're a military adviser; what is your recommendation?
**John:** Drop it.
**Mr. Smith:** I'm going to give you the political viewpoint. [Then Mr. Smith tells about the concerns of politicians to stop the war immediately.] But you have to consider morality—Marta, be our conscience. What are the moral implications?
**Marta:** Killing innocent people.

**Mr. Smith:** What is your recommendation?
**Marta:** Don't drop.
**Mr. Smith:** What are the other alternatives?
**Marta:** Drop it.
**Mr. Smith:** I mean, what else could you do without dropping the bomb?
**Marta:** Warn them.
**Pam:** What good would that do?
**Sally:** God, they had kamikaze pilots!
**Mr. Smith:** How about if we reversed this; pretend the Japanese had sent us a message that they had a bomb. What would we have done, surrendered? Pablo?
**Pablo:** No.
**Mr. Smith:** OK, president, are we going to drop it? (speaking to Sally)
**Sally:** Yes, those people are crazy; they would kill us.

In this example, Mr. Smith was encouraging students to look at an issue from varying points of view, although he was still doing most of the talking.

On one occasion Mr. Smith allowed an entire class period for an open-forum discussion related to student concerns about local rioting in a section of nearby Washington, D.C. The riots had begun when an Hispanic man was shot by a police officer. Mr. Smith overheard the students discussing this as he prepared to start his lecture/recitation:

**Pablo:** We're talking about the situation in D.C.
**Mr. Smith:** OK. What's the argument of the Hispanic brothers?
**Pablo:** The guy shouldn't have been shot.
**Mr. Smith:** What about the knife he had?
**Pablo:** The word is out! If that guy dies...
**Tanya:** You don't see black people doing that [rioting]!
**Mr. Smith:** Wait a minute!

[Observer's note: At this point in the discussion, Mr. Smith gave a brief historical lesson describing the rioting that occurred in the District of Columbia after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and compared the causes of the recent and the past rioting. The open-forum discussion continued until the end of the class period. Many students joined with their opinions; Mr. Smith asked them to support their opinions and provided historical background information. An Hispanic school employee who was passing in the hall was also asked (by Mr. Smith) to briefly join the discussion.]

On the day following this atypical open-forum discussion, Mr. Smith returned with even greater vigor to his usual lecture/recitation and recitation, using outline notes on the overhead projector:

**Mr. Smith:** [to the class] Copy this [outline written on an overhead]; we have a lot of information to cover. You were fooling around yesterday [teacher smiling].

**Student:** [protesting] We weren't fooling around, we were having a discussion!
**Mr. Smith:** Yeah, we had to save Pablo from going down there. [Observer's note: Pablo had indicated that he might go to the riot scene.]
**Student:** [talking to herself] I think he went down anyway. [Observer's note: During the remainder of the class period, the teacher quickly covered material written in outline form on five transparencies. I had great difficulty copying all the required material during class.]

### Mr. Smith's Instructional Decisions

Alvermann and her colleagues (1990) found that teachers' stated beliefs about discussion are often not put into action; they hypothesized that conditions in the context of schools may make it difficult for teachers to implement their stated beliefs. As illustrated above, Mr. Smith was able to implement his stated beliefs, at least part of the time. However, interviews and informal conversations revealed that he felt continuing conflict and occasional anger over difficulty related to his instructional decision making. This conflict appeared to be caused by both incongruities in his own beliefs and conflicts he perceived among his beliefs, district and school requirements, student needs, and student beliefs. Contextual and student influences are illustrated on the top and right sides of Figure 1.

Mr. Smith's district expected U.S. history teachers to "cover" American history, from exploration to the present, in one year, during daily 50-minute time blocks. This requirement was flexible in that teachers were able to choose which topics to emphasize, although the district curriculum guide offered suggestions. In addition, students were not evaluated on school or district-wide history tests and, according to Mr. Smith, teachers were not evaluated on whether they actually completed the curriculum. However, as in most high schools, time periods were rigid.

Interviews revealed that Mr. Smith perceived enormous time pressure for several reasons. First, he personally wanted to "get to the present" so students could learn about recent history. This goal was congruent with the district curriculum and supported by at least one family, as illustrated by this conversation between Mr. Smith and Marta early in May:

**Marta:** My uncle says you're a good teacher, because you already got to WWII.
**Mr. Smith:** What, that's my claim to fame?
**Marta:** Yes, he says most history teachers never get to the present; you're good because you've gotten a long way.

Second, Mr. Smith perceived that his particular students needed an especially thorough coverage of American history because many were recent immigrants and lacked background knowledge in the subject. On one occasion he reported that he could not assume that students had even heard of Abraham Lincoln. Finally, he perceived that many of his students were weak in English reading and writing skills, even though most of the Limited English Proficient (LEP) students in his class had "graduated" from the school's ESL program. This was a schoolwide concern, and the administration supported an emphasis on content area reading and writing, although Mr. Smith worried that his own knowledge in this area was weak.

These three conditions caused Mr. Smith to believe that his curriculum was severely overloaded and necessitated limiting many valuable types of instruction, including open-forum discussions. The various pressures Mr. Smith perceived from the district, students, and his own beliefs were illustrated in a conversation I had with him immediately following the open-forum discussion about the riots:

**Mr. Smith:** Sorry we never got to what I had planned.
**Observer:** No, that was important.
**Mr. Smith:** Sometimes you have to make digressions, but the trouble is you never finish, you never get to what you're supposed to get to. Somebody could say, "Why?"
**Observer:** Is that really a problem?
**Mr. Smith:** No, not really.
**Observer:** Except (joking) Marta's uncle.
**Mr. Smith:** (laughing) Yes, he's watching.

The use of an entire class period for the open-forum discussion also caused Mr. Smith to cancel a film he thought would have been valuable for students to view.

"Covering" all of American history in detail, from exploration to the present, seemed to Mr. Smith a formidable task, which only became more difficult with each passing year. He made repeated references to being "behind" or "ahead" of other teachers in the school and his own personal schedule for content coverage. For example, Mr. Smith said one day that he was getting "behind." When asked how he knew he was behind, he said, "Behind where I was this time last year."

## CONCLUSION

Mr. Smith is a dedicated high school history teacher who expressed a belief in the value of open-forum discussions in history instruction and conducted this type of discussion during part of some class periods and, less frequently, for an entire class period. His predominant mode of instruction, however, was lecture/recitation, which has been criticized by many educators as promoting factual memorization and passive learning (Brozo & Simpson, 1991; McNeil, 1986). Mr. Smith's decisions about which types of discussion to allow resulted from difficult choices. He weighed conflicts and compatibility among his own beliefs about the best way to teach history, district curriculum requirements, student beliefs and needs, and, especially, the limited time available. He was frustrated by the constant juggling act that this instructional decision making required and by the realization that he couldn't accomplish everything he believed his students needed.

Mr. Smith's dilemma may sound commonplace to secondary social studies teachers. It has been previously argued, for example, that a heavy reliance on lecture methods in social studies classes may be a reaction to the time restrictions and heavy content coverage requirements typical in this content area (Newmann, 1988). Literacy professionals who work with secondary teachers, however, may be less familiar with the context of high school social studies instruction. Systematic studies that present descriptions of the context of secondary instruction are still rare (Moore, 1992).

Mr. Smith's story illustrates that it is important for educators to recognize that experienced content teachers have long-standing professional beliefs about the best way to teach in their content areas and that these beliefs interact with contextual and student factors when instructional decisions are made. School districts and teacher educators who wish to help teachers increase their use of open-forum discussions or any other theory-based instructional practices must learn about teachers' beliefs about teaching, learning, and students. In addition, discussions and decisions about contextual conditions such as curriculum and required content coverage are vital and must include teachers. Real change will not result when "new" practices are simply added on top of the old.

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# THESIS AWARD

# Effects of Direct Instruction of Story Grammar on Story Writing and Reading Comprehension of Elementary School Learning Disabled Students

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A major concern in today's society is that students have difficulty comprehending basic reading materials and writing structured, coherent text. This concern is especially acute with regard to learning disabled students (Montague, 1988). Whereas effective readers are believed to use an organizing structure of text knowledge to integrate incoming information (Olson & Gee, 1988), learning disabled students tend to read in a haphazard, word-by-word fashion (Berdine & Blackhurst, 1981). Likewise, while effective writers possess and use knowledge about text structures in shaping their texts, learning disabled students write with little attention to organizational plans (Berdine & Blackhurst, 1981).

One possible way to provide structure for learning disabled students' reading and writing is to introduce them to story grammar, the basic "formula" for narrative texts (time, place, characters, initiating event, internal response, attempt, consequences, and reaction). Not only does direct instruction in story grammar improve normal children's comprehension, but also there is evidence that it helps them generate better organized stories (Olson & Gee, 1988). Although story grammar instruction for normal children has been intended primarily to improve reading ability, an unexpected by-product of this instruction has been a positive change in their writing (Idol, 1987; Pahl, 1987). To date, few studies have focused on using direct instruction in both reading *and* writing to improve readers' story schema. Moreover, no study has attempted such an integrated approach with a population of learning disabled students.

With these concerns in mind, the present study tested the following hypothesis: learning disabled students who receive direct instruction about story grammar in both reading and writing mini-lessons will compose more structured narrative stories and comprehend narratives better than will students who receive direct instruction about story grammar in reading only or students who receive no direct story grammar instruction.

## STORY GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION

Story grammar instruction is designed to teach children how stories can be organized or structured (Fitzgerald, Spiegel & Teasley, 1987). The purpose of the instruction should be to provide students with opportunities to experience a variety of stories in an organized fashion using the story grammar as a foundation (Pahl, 1987).

Not all students acquire and use knowledge of story grammar naturally; this is especially true of learning disabled students. Direct instruction in story grammar might help them to overcome weaknesses in attention, recall, and perception. Coley (1982) emphasized that attempts to get children to transfer similar processes from reading to writing need to be structured by the teacher.

The story grammar utilized in the present study was a combination of Gray's (1988) hierarchy and Dickinson and Weaver's (1982) definitions of categories. Before instruction begins, it is advisable for the teacher to construct a story map. This is a planning tool that helps to analyze the story so that the questions asked will create a framework for understanding and remembering the text (Vacca & Vacca, 1989). Table 1 shows the components and example of a story map and questions that correspond to its elements (Piccolo, 1986).

## METHOD

### *Subjects*

A total of 78 learning disabled students from seven school districts in south central Pennsylvania participated in the study. All students were placed in full-time learning disabled classroom settings. The population was middle class, predominantly Caucasian, with 58 boys and 20 girls. Grade levels ranged from first to sixth grade.

All participating classrooms met the following criteria: (1) reading was taught using "whole language" principles, (2) writing was taught using "process writing" instruction, and (3) reading and writing mini-lessons could be provided four times a week.

### Design

A multigroup, pretest-posttest, control group design was used. The experimental group received instruction of story grammar both in reading and writing mini-lessons. Experimental subjects received direct instruction in reading for a total of five weeks (20 lessons, 4 lessons per week) and direct instruction in writing for a total of three of these same five weeks (12 lessons, 4 lessons per week).

The comparison group received story grammar instruction only in reading

**TABLE 1**
**Components of a Story Map**

STORY MAP

Name ______________________ Date ______________
Title of Story The Very Busy Spider
Author Eric Carle

The Setting

| main characters: | time: | place/location: |
|---|---|---|
| **spider** | **morning**<br>**day** | **fence post**<br>**farm** |

Initiating Event
**A spider landed on a fence post and began to spin a web.**

Internal Response (goals, plans, thoughts)
**The spider's only goal was to spin a web.**

Attempts (actions)
**A horse, a cow, a sheep, a goat, a pig, a dog, a cat, and a duck all tried to get the spider to do different things.**

Consequence (result of attempt)
**The spider just kept working and finished her web.**

Reaction (character's response to consequence)
**Because the spider had worked so hard, she fell asleep.**

**Questions that Correspond to a Story Grammar**

1. Setting—Who are the main characters in the story?
2. Setting—Where does the story take place?
3. Setting—What time does the story occur?
4. Initiating event—What did your character do first?
5. Internal response—How does your character feel about this? What expression of feeling does he or she show?
6. Attempt—Because of what just happened, what does your character do next?
7. Consequence—As a result of what your character did, what happened?
8. Reaction—How does your character feel now?

mini-lessons for a total of five weeks (20 lessons, 4 lessons per week), the entire treatment period. This group allowed for an examination of the separate effects of reading- and writing-related story grammar instruction.

Finally, the pure control group did not receive story grammar instruction in either reading or writing mini-lessons. The control group formed a baseline against which the learning of the experimental and comparison groups could be evaluated.

### Treatment

Each part of the story grammar was introduced separately. A core of 30 story maps was provided, but the teachers were encouraged to construct their own. Instruction began by the teacher orally reading a familiar story, and each story part was discussed in relation to the story. Other stories were then read orally by the teacher, and the respective parts were identified by the students as the story proceeded. The instructional cycle involved introducing each story grammar element to students, explaining the element, and providing students with examples of the element from familiar books. Previously introduced elements were reviewed before new ones were discussed. Finally, students independently practiced finding story grammar elements in a story read aloud to them.

For the experimental group, the same instructional sequence was also used for writing. The students were guided through the steps to analyze stories they had written and assisted in constructing any parts that were missing.

### Testing

Before treatment began, all students were tested individually in story grammar awareness in both reading and writing. The reading pretest consisted of two subtests that were combined to attain one story grammar-reading pretest score. In one reading subtest, the teacher read a story to the student and then asked the student to retell the story. The second reading subtest involved students' responses to specific follow-up comprehension questions. The retelling was scored using the guide shown in Table 2; the specific question responses were scored using a similar format. All of the passages were taken from *Qualitative Reading Inventory* (Caldwell & Leslie, 1990).

The writing pretest examined students' story grammar knowledge in writing. Each student was asked to submit his or her best story. The examiner then evaluated the stories using the format in Table 3 (Piccolo, 1986). Both the reading and writing analyses used the presence of story elements and degree of elaboration as indicators of story grammar knowledge. After the experimental and comparison groups completed treatment, the same tests were administered as posttest measures for all groups. Reading and writing pre- and posttests were evaluated by three raters. The highest possible combined score for reading was 30 points (16 points for retelling and 14 points for questions). The highest possible score for the writing variable was 20 points. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations were used to determine interrater reliability among the three evaluators. Of the 18 coefficients (three

**TABLE 2**
**Components of a Story Map Checklist**

Name ____________ Grade ______ Age ____ Date ________

Title of Story ____________ Level ________

**General Directions:** Place a checkmark for each element in one of the four columns.

| | Mentioned Elaborated upon | Mentioned | Not Mentioned | Not Applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Setting: | | | | |
| Main characters | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Time | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Place/Location | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Initiating Event | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Internal Response (goals, plans, thoughts) | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Attempt (actions) | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Consequence (result of attempt) | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Reaction (character's response to consequence) | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Highest Possible Score 16 | 2X____ # of checks | 1X____ # of checks | 0X____ # of checks | 2X____ # of checks |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ________ | + | ________ | + | ________ | + | ________ | = | ________ |
| Mentioned Elaborated upon | | Mentioned | | Not Mentioned | | Not Applicable | | Child's Score |

examiners by six measures), 17 were .90 or higher. The one exception was for the prewriting measure, which still evidenced a respectable coefficient of .79.

## RESULTS

Analysis of covariance was used to control for possible differences between groups at the pretest. Posthoc analyses were conducted using a Newman-Keuls

**TABLE 3**
**Chart for Evaluating Story Grammar Checklist**

Name ____________________ Grade ______ Age _____ Date __________

Title of Story ______________________________________________

**General Directions:** Place a checkmark for each element in one of the four columns.

| | Mentioned Elaborated upon | Mentioned | Not Mentioned | Not Applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Evaluating Setting | | | | |
| When? | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Where? | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Who? | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Goal? | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Interference with goal? | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Evaluating Episodes | | | | |
| Initiating Event | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Internal Response | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Attempt | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Consequence | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Reaction | ______ | ______ | ______ | ______ |
| Highest Possible Score 20 | 2X____ # of checks | 1X____ # of checks | 0X____ # of checks | 2X____ # of checks |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ______ | + | ______ | + | ______ | + | ______ | = | ______ |
| Mentioned Elaborated upon | | Mentioned | | Not Mentioned | | Not Applicable | | Child's Score |

Multiple Range Test. Tables 4 and 5 present means and standard deviations for all pretest and posttest scores. Inspection of the data reveals that at the beginning of the study, the control, comparison, and experimental groups were quite similar.

On the posttest, the comparison and experimental groups' reading scores were approximately 1.4 and 2.6 points higher than the control group's score. The writing variable posttest mean scores for the control and comparison groups were relatively similar, showing only a 0.8 point difference. The largest difference was noted in the writing variable for the experimental group. The experimental group's mean was approximately 5.5 points higher than the control group's mean and 4.7 points higher than the comparison group's mean.

To determine whether significant differences existed among the three groups, analyses of covariance were computed for reading and writing dependent measures. In addition, separate analyses of covariance were computed for reading retelling and comprehension questions. These separate analyses were conducted to determine whether the differences in the total reading variable were stemming from both or either of the subtest dependent measures.

The ANCOVA for the total reading variable indicated significant main effects for group, $F$ (2,74) = 10.57, $p < .0001$. A Newman-Keuls post hoc analysis indicated that the mean of the experimental group was significantly greater than the mean of the control group ($p < .01$). The comparison group's mean was also significantly greater than the control group mean ($p <$

**TABLE 4**
**Pretest Scores for Reading and Writing Variables**

| Group | Reading | | Writing | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD Control |
| Control | 7.3 | 1.8 | 7.5 | 2.2 |
| Comparison | 7.1 | 1.8 | 7.2 | 2.2 |
| Experimental | 7.4 | 1.8 | 7.7 | 2.9 |

**TABLE 5**
**Posttest Scores for Reading and Writing Variables**

| Group | Reading | | Writing | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD Control |
| Control | 6.9 | 2.2 | 7.4 | 2.3 |
| Comparison | 8.3 | 2.0 | 8.2 | 2.8 |
| Experimental | 9.5 | 2.3 | 12.9 | 2.3 |

.05). The experimental and comparison groups were not found to be significantly different ($p > .05$).

The separate ANCOVA for the reading retelling also indicated significant main effects for group, $F\ (2,74) = 6.62$, $p < .0023$. The posthoc analysis indicated that the mean of the experimental group was significantly greater than that of the control group ($p < .01$). No other comparisons were significantly different.

The separate ANCOVA for the comprehension questions likewise indicated significant main effects for group, $F\ (2,74) = 6.76$, $p < .002$. The posthoc analysis indicated that the mean of experimental group was significantly greater than that of the control group ($p < .01$). The experimental and comparison groups were not found to be significantly different ($p > .05$), nor were the comparison and control groups ($p > .05$).

The ANCOVA for the writing measure indicated significant main effects for group, $F\ (2,74) = 38.8$, $p < .0001$. The analysis indicated that the experimental group was significantly greater than both the comparison and control groups ($p < .01$). The comparison and control groups, however, were not found to be significantly different ($p > .05$).

## DISCUSSION

The study indicates that instruction in story grammar in both reading and writing seemed to improve learning disabled students' ability to write more structured, coherent narrative stories and to increase students' reading comprehension of narratives. The experimental group achieved the greatest gains in both writing ability and reading comprehension. The findings suggest that it is beneficial to use story grammar in both reading and writing instruction to achieve maximum benefit and to integrate between the two processes.

The results for reading were not surprising in light of research that has determined that direct instruction in story grammar leads to increased comprehension of stories (Olson & Gee, 1988; Rand, 1984). Story grammar allows readers to comprehend stories more easily because knowledge of story structure helps them remember the particulars of the story (Rhodes & Dudley-Marling, 1988).

The results for writing were not altogether surprising, even though limited research was available to support these findings. It has been reported that when story grammar instruction was devoted solely to improving reading ability, change also occurred in subjects' writing (Idol, 1987; Pahl, 1987). Therefore, by also directly instructing students in story grammar during writing, it was hypothesized that their writing ability would increase, and it did. Montague (1988) has suggested that if learning disabled students could be taught to focus on the story grammar elements when they read *and* write, story length would increase and structure would be enhanced. Rhodes & Dudley-Marling (1988) have also suggested that story grammar allows writers to compose a story more easily because the story structure helps them remember the specific elements of the story.

Results of the study were not entirely unexpected. Personal experience suggests that a learning disabled student cannot be told to "go write" a story. Some task structure needs to be imposed. Perhaps by taking the time to explain the story grammar structure, teachers enabled students to internalize a structure to utilize in their personal writing.

Another possible explanation for the high writing scores achieved by the experimental group involves transfer; that is, students were taught story grammar and then were assisted in transferring this awareness to their personal writing. By providing them with a representation of a story, teachers facilitated students' ability to use this knowledge in reading and writing. In addition, the explicit teaching of each story grammar element probably focused students' attention on examining their own stories in detail. This focus is particularly important for learning disabled students who have difficulty using attention selectively. With proper instruction, they can attend to the central ideas and avoid dwelling on irrelevant details.

A third explanation for the results may be that the teacher helped students focus on recalling meaningful segments, an area of difficulty for learning disabled students. The story grammar helps students simplify the task by grouping segments meaningfully (Berdine & Blackhurst, 1981). In effect, story grammar instruction enables students to specify the basic parts of a story and how they tie together to form a complete narrative (Vacca & Vacca, 1989).

One limitation of the present study was that the students were not randomly selected. Consequently, it would be improper to assume that all learning disabled students would perform similarly.

Despite this limitation, the study does show that direct instruction of story grammar in reading and writing may not only increase reading comprehension but also increase learning disabled students' ability to write more structured, coherent narrative stories. Based on the results of this study, the direct instruction of story grammar in reading and writing should be considered as a viable component of the instructional curriculum for elementary learning disabled students.

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# INQUIRIES IN COLLEGE AND ADULT LITERACY INSTRUCTION

# Fads or Substantive Changes in the Field of Adult Literacy?

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During the past several years, reading professionals have increased their interest in the field of adult literacy. Is this phenomenon positive, negative, or both? Is the reading community being swept into a fad that will wane, or are we in the forefront of substantive change? In this position paper, I identify nine current directions in adult literacy and discuss whether each should be viewed as a fad or a substantive change.

Adult literacy is a new area of interest for reading educators, and it is growing very rapidly. We want to learn more about the field, and we want to be involved; however, others have been more active in the past. This situation leaves us struggling not only with a need for more information about the field but also with frustrations about theoretically unsound practices we observe. In short, we are experiencing growing pains.

At least two problems face the reading community as we strive to understand our role in the adult literacy movement. First, what label should we assign to the adult who can't read effectively? Is the appropriate term "adult beginning reader," as is often used in the literature? How about "adult new reader"? A more recently coined term is "adult developing reader." The IRA resolution on adult literacy volunteer tutors (1992) uses the term "adult illiterate," which many professionals consider negative and unsatisfactory. In this paper, I use the term with which I am most comfortable, adult beginning reader, simply because I have used it for so long.

The second problem facing the reading community is identifying who is an adult beginning reader. How do we define the term? What constitutes literacy for adults? Is an adult a beginning reader if she or he cannot perform reading tasks required in a minimum wage job? Charnely and Jones (1986) say "an illiterate adult is an adult who thinks he has a reading or writing problem" (p. 171). In this paper, I use the following definition: An adult is a beginning reader if she or he judges her or himself unable to gain control of life because literacy tasks are barriers to success as the adult has defined success.

## FAD OR SUBSTANCE?

### Historical Amnesia

A major direction in the field of adult literacy is "cultural politics" (King & Brozo, 1992). Adult literacy, as a national problem, is currently a hot issue. We are politically correct to be concerned about adult literacy and to volunteer our time to eradicate the problem. We play a numbers game; citing large numbers makes a startling impact. But what do the numbers mean? Alarms sound; the immediate reaction is to declare an emergency. But these alarms have sounded off and on for four decades already, with little substantive and lasting socioeconomic commitment. Bracey (1992) calls this convenient lapse of memory "historical amnesia." Kazemek (1985) once likened it to the Phoenix rising from its ashes again and again.

The 100,000 Level Program was the alarm of the 1960s. As a young English teacher, I found myself on Okinawa, where many young soldiers were stationed during the Vietnam war. The armed forces, in need of more servicemen, relaxed literacy requirements in order to accept 100,000 young men who lacked basic reading skills. They were to be trained on service time by instructors like me. Yes, I was eager, interested, and dedicated. No, I had no knowledge about adult learning or reading. But I was there, the 100,000 were there, and we did our best. By the end of the 60s, I had learned that I needed and wanted more knowledge about adult beginning readers. The services have quietly retired the program; most of us don't remember it.

In the 1970s, President Nixon introduced the goal that all Americans would be literate by 1980. Thus was generated a new surge of interest, and Right to Read academies sprang up across the country with federal support. Many were staffed by dedicated personnel; many foundered because instructors did not know how to teach adult beginning readers. Appropriate standardized testing and attrition rates were haunting issues. Right to Read academies are no more. Although 1980 has come and gone. I think I can safely write that we are not yet a totally literate nation.

In the mid-1980s, Project Literacy United States (PLUS) surfaced. Micklos (1985) described the status of literacy and indicated actions that reading professionals might take. Duffy (1986) informed reading and adult educators about PLUS and encouraged professional involvement in this nationwide movement. PLUS featured a media campaign to inform about the plight of adult illiterates. PLUS has initiated a search for volunteers to tutor and adults to be tutored, on the assumption that once the match is made, the problem will be solved.

America 2000, arising from the PLUS movement, is the surge of the 1990s. The America 2000 goal for adult literacy states, "Every adult will be literate and possess the skills necessary to compete in a world economy." While former President Bush (1992) had been the major advocate of America 2000, it is likely that President Clinton will take up the torch, given his position statement about education in the Phi Delta Kappan (Clinton, 1992): "We ought to teach everybody who has a job to read..." (p. 137).

Why is this direction involving political interest a fad? Because so far the interest in adult literacy is whimsical and politically correct, not really grounded in commitment to the true needs of adult beginning readers. In each of the past four decades, the problem has been publicized, but the problem continues to exist with little evidence that we have grown beyond the publicity level to actually dealing with the underlying issues. Smith (1989) cautions that we have "oversold" literacy. That is, we have spent too much time publicizing a problem without really considering what the problem might be.

Why is this fad a problem? Surges of interest influence the types of support provided. Right now, workplace literacy programs are "in," just as Right to Read academies once were. Proposals for grant monies that feature the workplace garner attention. Questions about why many adults do not find literacy programs helpful, or what barriers to reading adults encounter, or how adults approach and abandon text seem to be less interesting, although exploring answers to them would most likely provide much greater insight for instruction. When we stop forgetting that we have already called attention to the problem—historically and hysterically—and begin to support sound research and programs in a consistent manner, then we will finally move from fad to substance.

## The Quick Fix

Frank Laubach's motto was "each one teach one." The emphasis on individual instruction for adults who are beginning readers makes good sense, just as a reading intervention model for young children does. But the notion that anyone can be the teacher is misleading. Certainly, as the PLUS movement affirms, caring is a prerequisite. But is it the only one? "All you need is a degree in caring" is an unsettling premise when one considers that many adult beginning readers probably present more, not fewer, complex challenges for instruction than children. Few individuals really learn to read overnight or over a few months. Most who learn to read have been guided by teachers who have studied methods of reading instruction.

Certainly some adults will respond to a caring tutor by experiencing remarkable success. Anderson's (1990) stories of adults and their tutors is testimony to that, as is the heartwarming description recently published in *Reading Today* (Specter, 1992). Sometimes success can be achieved with care, dedication, and knowledge provided in tutor training workshops, but not always and maybe not often enough. Kazemek (1985) states, "Literacy acquisition is a gradual long-term developmental process that begins quite early for most children growing up in a print saturated society" (p. 332). Roscow (1992) muses over Harry, who had tried several teachers before her, and abandoned his work with her as well. The International Reading Association (IRA) Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutors resolution (1992) grapples with this issue.

The quick fix direction is a fad. It ignores adults' complex histories and social problems that heavily influence the success, failure, or frustration that teachers and adult beginning readers may experience. When we fully integrate the next several directions I identify into our professional practice, we will no longer expect quick fixes and will have moved forward with substantive change.

### Professional Organizations Join the Bandwagon

In the early 1980s, the College Reading Association (CRA) formed a new division, the Adult Learning Division. While this division is interested in all types of adult learners, a major focus has been on adult beginning readers. At approximately the same time, IRA formed an ad hoc Adult Literacy Committee to focus on ways that IRA could support the adult literacy movement and create awareness among members, the majority of whom are K-12 teachers. This committee drafted optional Honor Council guidelines to encourage IRA local councils to conduct adult literacy projects. The Adult Literacy Special Interest Group (ALSIG) was formed shortly after the Adult Literacy Committee. Both CRA and IRA have published monographs about adult literacy within the past few years. Clay (1992) explores "what it means to be illiterate" in a recent issue of *Reading Today* and concludes that IRA should be able to "make an impact on the 'manageable' problem of illiteracy" (p. 3).

While most reading professionals who study adult literacy issues probably agree with Clay, we also need to acknowledge that we are relative latecomers to the field. The American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) has a much longer history of involvement, as do volunteer organizations. This is not to say that we should not be involved. However, our involvement does coincide with the latest surge of interest (PLUS, America 2000), so we will have to prove our interest by demonstrating sustained commitment over many years before we earn the right to step off the bandwagon and onto the main concourse.

### Linking with Volunteer Organizations

Professional volunteer networks represent a very encouraging direction. Two major volunteer tutor organizations, Laubach Literacy International (LLI) and Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) have sent representatives to IRA's Adult Literacy committee and ALSIG meetings. The presentation "Discovering Allies" was offered at the recent national conferences of LLI and IRA. LLI, LVA, and IRA are working together to promote awareness and appreciation of the literacy missions of each group, as well as to identify resources and technical support that each group can offer the others through collaboration.

Boraks and McLendon (1986) discuss how important it is for reading and adult educators to provide support systems for volunteer tutors. Imel (1986) focuses on several positive aspects of volunteers in adult literacy programs.

Richardson (1988) encourages professionals to respect the historically solid interest and dedication of volunteers. As a positive example of the links that can be made, the CRA monograph *Teaching Adult Beginning Readers: To Reach Them My Hand* (Frager, 1991) has been reprinted by LVA and is being offered through the LVA catalog.

The relationship between volunteers and reading professionals is still fragile. At the grass roots, many volunteers may view the K-12 professional with some skepticism—the bandwagon versus the concourse. Volunteers have long filled a need in adult beginning reading instruction when reading professionals apparently did not realize a need existed. How we offer to be a part of the adult literacy field is crucial. We can collaborate and provide assistance, but we should not usurp the place of those who have filled a need during those decades of historical amnesia. Professional volunteer linkages of substance require long-term commitments.

### Redefining the Adult Beginning Reader

Unfortunately, many reading educators came to adult literacy with a narrow view of the adult beginning reader. The deficit or "have not" view is reflected in the International Reading Association (1988; 1992) resolution on Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutors. Although the resolution focuses on tutor training, a statement in the background section states that "undereducated adults have severe personal, social and economic problems, and as a result, society also suffers." Richardson (1989), in a rejoinder, wrote that "...this is a matter opinion, not fact...people who are not literate are not necessarily failures in life" (p.2). While some undereducated adults do have severe personal, social, and economic problems, it is a myth that the majority do. Many adult beginning readers are very successful personally, socially, and economically. The only deficit they have is a lack of literacy. Sweeping statements such as that in the IRA resolution provide a disservice to society because such statements keep us from identifying the real issues. The stories Rose (1990) tells poignantly illustrate that adult literacy must be viewed in a social context.

Fortunately, much of the qualitative research about adult beginning readers has belied the deficit view. Fingeret (1983) has revealed that many illiterate adults form networks wherein they take care of their literacy needs quite efficiently while carrying on productive lives. Avilla (1983) describes the "exchange systems" adults create to "pay for" literacy services. Richardson and Thistlethwaite (1991) propose several principles based on such research and suggest practical implications for instruction based on them. Gabb (1989), in her study of three adult developing readers, found that they possessed very strong oral/aural communication skills but lacked an awareness of text structure and cognitive strategies for reading. These women hardly experienced severe personal, social, or economic problems. They simply desired to be literate as a means to empowerment.

Malicky and Norman (1989) also describe the concepts and strategies of adult nonreaders, stressing strengths rather than weaknesses. King and Brozo (1992) encourage a critical approach to literacy, which allows disenfranchised groups, such as adult beginning readers, to determine for themselves what it means to be literate without predetermined restraints such as social roles, prepackaged curricula, and overdetermined teaching. However, the "have not" view–which IRA apparently espouses—restrains adults in those predetermined roles.

The current direction is to redefine who the adult beginning reader is, stressing the *different* way in which that person has viewed literacy. Ironically, the deficit view faded long ago from the literature about diagnosis and correction of reading problems in the K-12 sector, but it continues to linger with adult beginning readers. It is disappointing to read the revised resolution from IRA and discover that its deficit statement has not been altered, even though several IRA members have expressed concern. When reading professionals look at literacy in a social context, where empowerment and ownership, not impoverishment and isolation, are the issues, then this direction will fade from fad to substantive change.

### Integrating Knowledge

The integration of knowledge from several disciplines has enhanced research and practice with adult beginning readers. For instance, Boraks and Richardson (1985) identified significant research in adult education and reading and presented instructional implications based on those studies. Several authors (Keefe & Meyer, 1991; Malicky & Norman, 1989; Richardson & Thistlethwaite, 1991; Siedow, 1991) have proposed instructional strategies that combine knowledge of adult learning theory, adult psychology, recent thrusts in content area reading, whole language, and process writing. Taking a linguistic view, Gabb (1989) discovered that adults in her study possessed "inappropriate expectations of written language that can be related to their dependence on oral/aural communication" (p. 94). A recent article by Askov and Clark (1991) exemplifies the interest in the computer as an instructional tool for adults as well as children. Such integration of knowledge from numerous fields enriches the study of adult beginning readers and must be viewed as a substantive change.

### Learner-Based Assessment

During the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, when surges of interest in adult literacy occurred, emphasis was placed on standardization and formal test measures that were believed to be the best approach to diagnose problems and measure growth in reading. Funding for programs was often based on the use of standardized test measures, assumed to be the best way to demonstrate program gains. Yet adults' beliefs and attitudes about reading are ignored in such procedures. Many adults, frustrated by having to take yet another test, often do not return after a first session. By not respecting the learner's role in assessment, we lost many students. As a step toward a learner focus, Heathington, Gambrell, and Boser (1986) designed a learner-oriented inventory to help instructors better understand the perspective of the adult beginning reader.

Jackson (1990) traces some often-used standardized instruments and proposes alternatives that are learner based. The message that standardized tests are not the answer to the multifaceted problem and fail to measure anything related to the learners' goals (Metz, 1989) is finally being acknowledged. Thistlethwaite (1986), Lytle and Wolf (1989), Jones and Parker (1991), and Finlay and Harrison (1992) propose assessment that involves the adult learner in a nonthreatening process, often excluding standardized testing altogether but maintaining ways to find the best instructional program and measure gains.

*This is Not a Test: A Kit for New Readers* (1990) is one example of the "new wave" in adult literacy assessment. This booklet includes a series of affective and cognitive questions that represent a range of real-world literacy tasks. The directions are written *to the adult*, who can answer on his or her own, or with an instructor. While we still have a long way to go before learner-based assessment is entrenched, the direction represents substantive change.

### Qualitative Evaluation

As we move away from quantitative measures such as standardized tests as stand-alone indicators of learner and program success, we are moving toward more qualitative, inquiry-based approaches. Such a shift means that questions more pertinent to real issues can be raised. For instance, the high attrition rate in adult literacy programs has been a cause for concern during the past four decades. Why? Finding an answer to this question can lead us to construct better programs in which adults will stay enrolled and learn to read. In the early 1980s, Richardson (1981) searched for the answer by studying dropout records from a literacy program, hoping to correlate identified stages of adult development with peak dropout times. No adults were interviewed; the emphasis of the study was strictly on quantitative evaluation. This approach provided little insight; few specific patterns were discerned. However, Fingeret (1983; 1991) has conducted qualitative studies in an attempt to answer a similar question. By interviewing adults and tutors and observing how adult beginning readers cope in a literate world and what adults do with literacy information they gain, she has been able to describe in great depth what adults consider to be a successful program and why they drop out of those they consider unsuccessful.

Gabb's study (1989) is another example of qualitative inquiry leading to real answers about how adults approach literacy tasks. Lytle and Wolf (1989) and Padak and Padak (1991) suggest practical ways to conduct inquiry-based evaluation rather than rely on stand-alone, quantitative measures that reveal little that is of use in developing successful adult literacy programs. Such qualitative evaluation has revealed useful information. It is a substantive change.

### Specialization

One powerful indication that a field has gained some maturity is the degree of specialization that begins to occur within it. Prior to the 1980s, adult literacy was adult literacy. Today, when one refers to adult literacy, one has to be more specific. A doctoral student came to visit me recently and stated that she wished to write her dissertation about adult literacy. I asked her whether she was interested in workplace literacy, adult basic education, tutor training, the correctional environment, intergenerational literacy, or adults who are studying English as a second language. She was amazed to realize that the field now comprises so many specialties.

The number of specialized articles one can locate within sources that previously published very little about adult literacy is testimony to this substantive change in the field. For instance, in a recent issue of *Reading Today*, one can read about "Motheread" (Collins, 1992), a program for prison moms who are beginning readers, and about another intergenerational literacy program (Cruz, 1992). Sticht (1975), Mikulecky (1982), Phillipi (1988), and Siedow (1990) have described workplace literacy programs. And prison literacy is described by Hansel and Voelkel (1992) in the *Journal of Reading.*

## CONCLUSION

Adult literacy, as a whole, is no longer a fad in reading education, but certain directions that reading professionals have taken are still suspect. Of the nine trends I have identified, only the first two are "pure" fads, the next three are well on their way to becoming substantive, and the last four are recognized directions of substance in the field. Reading professionals are growing up in regard to adult literacy. We still have some growing to do; we are not nearly so mature in this area of reading as we are in other areas. However, to be leaders for substantive change in the field, we need to understand the issues we face.

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## APPENDIX

**Fad vs. Substantive Change in Adult Literacy**

| Current Direction | Possible Fad or Substantive Change? | Notes | Resources to Consider |
|---|---|---|---|
| "Historical Amnesia," otherwise known as Political Interest | FAD—can a politically correct view become a socio/educational commitment? | 1960s = 100,000 program<br>1970s = Right to Read<br>1980s = PLUS<br>1990s = America 2000 | Bush<br>Bracey<br>Clinton<br>Duffy<br>Kazemek<br>King & Brozo<br>Micklos<br>Smith |
| The "Quick Fix" | FAD—anyone can fix it | Each one teach one.<br>All you need is a degree in caring…<br>Will we ever realize that adults probably represent more complex challenges, not fewer? | Anderson<br>Kazemek<br>Roscow<br>Smith<br>Specter<br>IRA resolution |
| Professional Organizations Join the Bandwagon | FAD fast becoming a substantive change | CRA Adult Learning Div<br>IRA Adult Lit committee & ALSig monographs: CRA, IRA | Clay<br>Frager<br>Newman & Beverstock |
| Linking with Volunteer Organizations | FAD fast becoming a substantive change | LLI, LVA<br>Professional-volunteer networks | Boraks & McLendon<br>Frager<br>Imel<br>Richardson |

## APPENDIX (continued)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Redefining the Adult Developing Reader | FAD fast becoming a substantive change | From the deficient "have nots" to the different "haves " looking at literacy in a social context; empowerment & ownership | Avilla<br>Fingeret<br>Gabb<br>King & Brozo<br>Malicky & Norman<br>Richardson<br>Richardson & Thistlethwaite<br>Rose |
| Integrating Knowledge | Substantive change | Linguistics, CAR, whole language, psychology, technology, research... | Askov & Clark<br>Boraks & Richardson<br>Gabb<br>Keefe & Meyer<br>Malicky & Norman<br>Richardson & Thistlethwaite<br>Siedow |
| Learner-based Assessment | Substantive change | Less formality or standardization; learner involvement | Finlay & Harrison<br>Heathington et al.<br>Jackson<br>Jones & Parker<br>Lytle & Wolfe<br>Metz<br>Thistlethwaite<br>"This is Not a Test" |
| Qualitative Evaluation | Substantive change | Moving from competencies & standardized tests as stand-alone measures; toward qualitative, inquiry approaches | Fingeret<br>Gabb<br>Lytle & Wolfe<br>Padak & Padak<br>Richardson |
| Specialization | Substantive change | Adult literacy comprises: workplace; ABE, tutor training, corrections, intergenerational & family literacy, ESL... | Collins<br>Cruz<br>Hansell & Voelkel<br>Mikulecky<br>Phillipi<br>Siedow<br>Stitch |

# School Experiences of Adults Participating in Volunteer Literacy Programs

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Adults join literacy programs in order to learn to read and write—learning that has eluded them in their previous educational efforts. They bring with them a variety of experiences, including educational successes and failures, social networks, and accomplishments at work and in social settings.

A frequent practice in adult literacy programs is to hold an initial interview during which adults are asked to share information about educational experiences and accomplishments. This information is then used to plan appropriate instruction. Among the questions commonly asked of adults entering literacy programs are "When did you leave school?" "How well do you think you read?" "What is it you try to do when you read?" The assumption that adults can provide this kind of information is evidenced in Hansell and Voelkel's (1990) survey of prisoners and in Rosow's (1988) informal survey of literacy students. In both cases, adults' recollections provided insights into their early learning experiences and into the strategies they currently employ.

In an earlier work, Fox and Siedow (1992) explored factors pertaining to children's success in school that are likely also to be antecedents of illiteracy in adults. Observations of the value placed on literacy, early experiences with books, and parental support for learning contributed to patterns of literacy behavior in families. In this study, we continue to explore the impact of antecedents as they are mirrored in the recollections of adults participating in literacy programs. Our purpose here is to investigate adults' metacognitive perceptions of their school experiences in order to identify patterns of literacy experiences common among low-literate adults. A second purpose is to examine metacognitive perceptions of the types of literacy strategies adults believe they use. A better understanding of adults' perceptions of themselves as readers may then lead to new ideas about the kinds of instruction that are most appropriate to meet the needs of older learners.

## METHOD

### Subjects

Subjects were 81 adults, ranging in age from 19 to 86 years. All were students in 25 community-based volunteer adult literacy programs in North Carolina. Subjects agreed voluntarily to participate in the study. Among the subjects were 36 females (12 Caucasian, 23 African-American, 1 other) and 45 males (19 Caucasian, 25 African-American, 1 other).

### Materials

An individually administered questionnaire was designed to examine adults' recall of school reading experiences and current reading strategies believed to affect the acquisition of literacy. The questionnaire was developed in the same manner as that followed by Fox and Siedow (1992). The design of the instrument is described by Issac and Michael (1974), and examples of similar questionnaires used to query adult populations can be found in Hansell and Voelkel (1990) and Ross and Smith (1990). The questionnaire was constructed to (1) be suitable for oral administration; (2) provide variety in the format of questions, including some open-ended questions to elicit multiple responses; and (3) contain a means of consistently recording responses. Some questions were designed for a yes/no response; others were designed for short answers and had follow-up probes to explore responses. In cases in which questions might elicit several answers, probable responses and blanks for entering other information were provided to expedite administration.

The instrument was field tested on a sample population of adult literacy students by a group of literacy volunteers. Modifications were made; this process was repeated twice. The final version of the questionnaire is in the appendix to this article.

### Design and Procedure

Administrators of 30 volunteer literacy programs were invited to participate in the study. Two copies of the questionnaire and directions were mailed to program administrators along with a letter explaining the purpose of the study. Administrators were asked to give the questionnaires to volunteer tutors with directions to read the questionnaires to their literacy students. Tutors then administered the questionnaires orally to individual adult literacy students. Questionnaires were returned from 25 of the 30 programs. In two of the programs, questionnaires were administered to more than two students, bringing the total of completed questionnaires to 81.

Responses to each of the seven questions and to follow-up clusters of related probes were tallied, and percentages of the totals were determined.

## RESULTS

The 81 adults surveyed were asked to describe their recollections of school experiences. No differences in recollections were found between men and women or between African-American and Caucasian subjects. Nine of the 81 adults reported leaving school in grades 1-3, 18 in grades 4-7, 38 in grades 8-12. Sixteen of the respondents had graduated from high school.

Of the 81 subjects, 69 responded to questions designed to explore the onset of reading difficulty. Forty-seven (68%) of the 69 remembered experiencing difficulty with reading in grades 1-3, more than at any other time (see Table 1). Of the 54 subjects who left school after seventh grade, 30 recalled the onset of difficulty in grades 1-3 and, therefore, spent most of their school years consciously aware of their personal inability to read. Interestingly, few individuals recalled first becoming aware of reading difficulty after grade 7. Thus, perceptions of difficulties were established well before the demands of content area reading became part of the curriculum.

When asked to identify aspects of reading that posed the greatest personal challenge, 69 (85%) of the 81 subjects stated that "sounding out" words was hard for them, while only 31 (38%) stated that they had trouble with comprehension. To further explore their perceptions, adults were asked to describe the strategies they use to identify unknown words and to comprehend text. Word attack strategies these adults reported using are shown in Table 2. The most commonly used strategy, "skip it," was reported by 21 (26%) of respondents, while 15 (19%) reported that they "look it up," and 10 (12%) reported that they use picture clues. Only one respondent reported the use of context clues, and none reported asking for help.

Reports of comprehension strategies are contained in Table 3. Thirty adults (37%) reported asking someone for help, followed by 24 (30%) who

**TABLE 1**
**Onset of Reading Difficulty**

| Grade Left School | Perceived Onset Grade | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1–3 | 4–6 | 7+ | No Response | Total |
| 1–3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 9 |
| 4–7 | 12 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 18 |
| 8–12 | 23 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 38 |
| High school | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 16 |
| Total | 47 | 18 | 4 | 12 | 81 |

**TABLE 2**
**Word Attack Strategies**

| | Grade Left School | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Word Attack Strategy | 1–3 N = 11 | 4–8 N = 28 | 9–12 N = 24 | HS N = 18 | Total | % |
| Skip | 2 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 21 | 26 |
| Look up | 0 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 15 | 20 |
| Pictures | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 10 | 12 |
| Small words | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 9 |
| Context | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Ask | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**TABLE 3**
**Comprehension Strategies**

| | Grade Left School | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reading Strategy | 1–3 N = 11 | 4–8 N = 28 | 9–12 N = 24 | HS N = 18 | Total | % |
| Reread | 1 | 6 | 11 | 6 | 24 | 30 |
| Skip it | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 10 |
| Picture | 0 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 11 |
| Slow | 0 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 11 | 14 |
| Context | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Ask | 5 | 5 | 14 | 6 | 30 | 37 |

reported rereading, and 11 (14%) who reported slowing down. Again, only one respondent reported using context as a key to meaning. In comprehension, where they reported having less difficulty in comparison with word attack, these respondents reported engaging in more collaborative interaction by asking for help.

## DISCUSSION

Respondents to this survey gave self-reports of their recollections of school experiences. These recollections may be occluded by the passage of time, by filters of individual experience, and by the interview situation itself. Nevertheless, consistencies in responses across subjects provide support for a number of generalizations from the data. This is particularly true in the reports of reading strategies currently used by subjects.

These respondents recalled an early onset of reading difficulties. They reported that "sounding out" words poses a greater challenge to their ability to read than does comprehension. Adults who began experiencing difficulties in their early years in school naturally developed a belief that some of their troubles lay with the most basic of literacy tasks, word identification. This is consistent with the concept of adult literacy students as "phonics bound" (Meyer & Keefe, 1990). Rosow (1988) reports that literacy students repeatedly stated that if they could learn to sound out words, they'd be fine.

Word attack strategies reported by these respondents are essentially passive (skip it) and intrusive (look it up). Both strategies require the reader to abandon text, yet do not place these people in the role of actively interacting with fellow members of the literacy community. Asking for assistance requires a certain amount of collaboration among individuals in the community of readers—collaboration that these respondents were not willing to attempt in word attack, their most difficult area. These results present a paradox in that one-fifth or better of the respondents use word attack strategies that abandon text. When readers abandon text, they ignore cues to meaning provided by the interplay of phonological, syntactic, and semantic information and prior knowledge, preferring instead to retreat from text in order to identify words.

Of the various comprehension strategies reported by these respondents, the majority placed control outside the reader (ask someone else) or were essentially passive (slow down, reread). Context, the strategy most interactive with text, was the least often reported. Respondents appear to wait for comprehension to occur rather than to take action to accomplish it. Individuals who do this are less likely to develop the kind of personal involvement with literacy that results from being confident of one's own abilities and attributing reading abilities to one's own resources.

The finding that the majority of adults remembered having trouble with reading early in school has intriguing implications for the way adults perceive their roles as learners. As learners move toward mature literacy behavior, their orientation to reading changes from depending on support from others to reading independently and relying on their own resources. One characteristic of readers beyond grade four is that they typically read well enough to be independent of extensive teacher support, have knowledge of the reading process, and use their own resources to learn from novel text. In contrast, younger children depend upon help from their teachers to gain knowledge of the reading process and to understand text.

As children, these respondents perceived themselves to be ineffective readers who struggled with a process over which they had insufficient control. The majority perceived onset of reading difficulty in the early years of school, grades 1-3, regardless of when they left school. These respondents did not learn to read well in the early grades; therefore, they remained dependent on the kind of extensive support from others that characterize less mature readers. Because these adults did not learn enough about the reading process to use effectively textual information and prior knowledge, they could not function as successful students in later grades where content area instruction is predominant. Lack of successful reading, in turn, had the effect of perpetuating their dependence on other more literate classmates and teachers. As a consequence, these respondents may never have learned to assume responsibility for their own reading.

In the absence of success, these adults perceived locus of control to be outside themselves and assigned it to others in the literacy community. A long history of reading difficulty may have convinced these adults that the responsibility for learning to read and for exercising control over reading resides outside themselves among individuals in the broader community. As a result, they may expect teachers and tutors to be providers of information while they, the adult literacy students, remain passive. In other words, reading is something that happens to these adult students, not something they personally direct.

The challenge to literacy providers, then, is to invite adult literacy students into collaborative learning situations that foster a shift in locus of control from that which is external to the learner to that which is internal to the learner. Instruction should be designed to aggressively foster active involvement in meaningful learning. The conclusions of this study provide support for making active learner participation a prominent and indispensable aspect of literacy instruction for adults.

## APPENDIX
## Literacy Questionnaire

Today's Date: ____________ City and State: ____________________

This questionnaire is to find out about adults' perceptions of their experiences learning to read. Please read the numbered questions to an adult with whom you work. Ask each question and then follow-up with the remaining parts as needed. Sometimes a list of possible answers is given for your convenience. Unless told otherwise, please don't read the list, just circle the answers the adult gives.

Age of Student: ____________ Sex: M F Race: White Black Other ______

1. "What is the last grade you attended in school?" ____________

   "IF GRADE 12, Did you graduate from high school?" YES NO

2. "Name two things about reading that were hard for you."

   Phonics Long words Short words Breaking down/sounding out words

   Comprehension/understanding Following directions Keeping the place

Other ____________

3. In which grade did you start to have trouble with reading? ____________

4. Did the teacher help you when you had trouble with reading? YES NO

IF YES, name at least one thing that she did. ____________________

5. What do you do when you come to a word that you don't know?

Break it down/sound it out Skip it Look it up Look at the pictures Find little words in big words Look for word families Other ____________

6. What do you do if you don't understand something that you read?

Reread Skip it Look at pictures Slow down Ask for help

Other ____________________

7. Do you ever ask other people to read for you? YES NO

IF YES,
What kinds of things do you need help with? ____________________

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# Effects of a Precollege Reading Course on the Academic Self-Esteem of Urban College Students

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A considerable body of research exists on the positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. Kershner (1990) noted the importance of self-concept as a primary cause of academic underachievement. Gerardi (1990) found that academic self-concept rather than traditional cognitive skills was a better predictor of success among minority and poor college students who were enrolled in technical programs.

Rotter's (1966) social learning theory explains such high correlations between self-concept and academic achievement. According to the theory, individuals with a strong internal locus of control have greater career success in life because they accept responsibility for the consequences of personal behavior. They recognize the relationship between their behavior and outcomes to a greater extent than those for whom locus of control is external.

Studies such as these have affected school curriculum. Educational policymakers who believe the development of student self-esteem to be an appropriate educational outcome have encouraged implementation of a variety of activities toward this end, ranging from personal sensitivity training for students to more deliberate self-esteem development courses and infusion of comprehensive self-esteem efforts across the curriculum (Beane, 1991).

The purpose of the present study was to assess the effects of precollege reading courses on the academic self-esteem of urban college students. It was anticipated that, even without deliberate efforts at enhancement, urban college students completing one semester of a precollege reading course would develop greater academic self-esteem. Academic self-esteem, as used here, refers to students' views of themselves as participants in the learning process; it includes beliefs about ability to participate in college course work and to perform tasks associated with academic study, including the ability to self-monitor study habits, to read textbook material, to be successful in classroom settings, to graduate from college, and to pursue the career of choice.

An increase in academic self-esteem was expected for several reasons. For students in this study, acceptance to college is tenuous at best. It was felt that admission to the college, even with the precollege requirements, would immediately provide students a more positive view about their future. This optimism would be supported by a semester of success on campus in a course that focused on developing academic literacies needed for college level work. As students experienced progress in this course work, they should develop new and positive views of themselves as participants in the learning process.

If self-esteem is increased by the end of the course, students who have been in the course should then have a better developed internal locus of control. Following Rotter's (1966) theory, they would then also have greater chances for success.

## METHOD

### Subjects

The sample for this study consisted of 102 students and five faculty members, all of whom voluntarily participated. Of these, 92 students in seven classes (60 males, 32 females) and five faculty members completed both pre- and post-phases. The remaining 10 students (five males, five females) stopped attending the course.

Students were enrolled in a precollege (noncredit) reading course based on the results of their entrance test, the New Jersey Basic Skills Test. The study was conducted over the course of two semesters. During the fall semester, 98% of the students and in the spring semester, 95% of the students enrolled were in the course for the first time.

The college is in an urban section of New Jersey and draws most of its students from the multiethnic area within which the college is located. The course typically serves nearly 50% of the freshman class. Most students are first-generation college students. The ethnic diversity of the student population in the course is representative of the ethnic diversity of the college at large. The enrollment by ethnic group for full time students in 1992 was 7% nonresident alien, 18% black non-Hispanic, 9% Asian or Pacific Islander, 24% Hispanic, 42% Caucasian, and less than 1% native American.

Four of the five faculty teaching the course were full-time tenured associate or full professors. One was an adjunct. Instructors were not directed to guide their teaching toward the development of academic self-esteem, nor were they asked to address any component on the questionnaires. The course focused on improving specific reading skills, such as identifying main ideas, and determining meanings of words from context. Course goals had been developed by the entire faculty of the department several semesters previously.

### Materials

Two questionnaires were used in this study. On the student questionnaire (Appendix A), students rated themselves on a scale ranging from *Not true of me at all* (1) to *Very true of me* (5) for 20 questions regarding their abilities to participate successfully in an academic environment. A 12-item questionnaire (Appendix B) was given to the five faculty. Seven questions focused on the type and percentage of time different materials were used; five questions dealt with types instructional groupings and the percentage of time each was used.

### Procedures

The student questionnaire was administered at the beginning of each semester. Postquestionnaires were administered at the end of each semester, as were faculty questionnaires. A total of 92 students responded to both questionnaires.

## RESULTS

Student questionnaire means were calculated and compared. The statistical test used was the *t*-test, comparing correlated means using pooled variances. All tests of significance were conducted at the .05 level. There was no attempt to control for other variables in the study. Student questionnaires were used as measures of self-esteem.

As predicted, at the end of one semester in a precollege reading course, students had significantly greater academic self-esteem. The mean questionnaire score at the beginning of the course was 3.37 ($SD$ = 1.22) and the mean score at the end of the course was 4.05 ($SD$ = .92, $t$ = 18.8, $p$ < .05). There was a smaller range of differences on the postquestionnaire, indicating a narrower range of individual self-esteem perceptions after taking the course. It was also noted that, despite being assigned to a precollege reading course, students began the semester feeling very positive about their chances of graduating from college and having a successful future.

Comparisons were made for three different age groups: 18–20, 21–24, 25 and older. All groups had significant increases in academic self-esteem (see Table 1). However, on the item concerning their perceptions of their ability to take tests (Item 5), no group showed any significant difference by the end of the semester. The 21- to 24-year-olds had the lowest overall mean at both the time of entrance and exit. The largest mean gain was made by the oldest group; the smallest mean gain was made by the youngest group. There were no discernible differences by gender. Mean scores were 3.4 for males ($n$ = 60) and 3.3 for females ($n$ = 32) at the time of entrance, and 4.04 and 4.07, respectively, at the end of the course. Gains for both sexes were significant at the .05 level.

A comparison was also made between students who did not complete the course and those who did. The former group had higher academic self-esteem at the beginning of the course than did the latter group, including perceptions

**TABLE 1**
**Self-Esteem Scores by Age Group**

| Age Group | *M* | *SD* | *t* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18–20 ($n = 52$) | | | |
| Pretest | 3.45 | 1.22 | |
| Posttest | 4.02 | .98 | 11.9* |
| 21–24 ($n = 25$) | | | |
| Pretest | 3.18 | 1.22 | |
| Posttest | 3.95 | .84 | 7.83* |
| 25+ ($n = 14$) | | | |
| Pretest | 3.39 | 1.20 | |
| Posttest | 4.29 | .76 | 10.6* |

$^*p < .05$

of their own reading abilities (Items 9 through 14). The mean rating at the time of entrance for the noncompleters ($n = 10$) was 3.63 as compared to an entrance mean of 3.37 for those who finished ($n = 92$). There was no discernible pattern in the kinds of questions on which students who dropped the course rated themselves higher than the rest of the sample. With a dropout pool of only 10 students, this particular finding of this study is, of course, preliminary.

Table 2 shows clusters of questionnaire responses along four dimensions of academic self-esteem: study skills, reading skills, participating in college classrooms, and expectation of a successful future. There was a significant increase at the .05 level in all attitude clusters, with the most significant mean increase in the area of students' perceptions of their reading skills.

Despite this large increase, the relative ranking of students' academic self-esteem within clusters did not change from pre- to postquestionnaire. During both administrations of the questionnaire, items in the reading skills cluster were given the lowest ranking, followed by study skills, participation in college classrooms, and expectations of a successful future.

Results from the instructor questionnaire are reported in Table 3. There were no discernible differences in the types of materials instructors used; a variety of texts was used. There was a difference, however, in how instruction was delivered. Two instructors used primarily large group instruction, two used primarily small group instruction, and one indicated using a variety of groupings, with emphasis primarily on paired instruction.

In classes where small group instruction was emphasized, there was a much larger mean gain in student self-esteem. Further, for this subgroup, there was a significant difference on all items, whereas this was not the case for students taught in classes emphasizing either paired learning or large group instruction.

**TABLE 2**
**Self-Esteem Scores by Academic Cluster**

| Self-Esteem Cluster | *M* | *SD* | *t* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Study skills (Items 1,2,3,4,6,7)** | | | |
| **Pretest** | 3.24 | 1.22 | |
| **Posttest** | 3.88 | 1.00 | 9.41* |
| **Reading skills (Items 9,10,11,12,13,14)** | | | |
| **Pretest** | 2.99 | 1.2 | |
| **Posttest** | 3.87 | .77 | 15.00* |
| **Participating in college classrooms (Items 5,8,15,16,18)** | | | |
| **Pretest** | 3.56 | 1.38 | |
| **Posttest** | 4.10 | .80 | 8.28* |
| **Expectation of a successful future (Items 17,19,20)** | | | |
| **Pretest** | 4.10 | 1.22 | |
| **Posttest** | 4.60 | 1.29 | 6.39* |

$N = 92$
$^{*}p < .05$

**TABLE 3**
**Self-Esteem Scores by Instructional Emphasis**

| Instructional Emphasis | *M* | *SD* | *t* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Small group ($n = 50$)** | | | |
| **Pretest** | 3.15 | 1.19 | |
| **Posttest** | 4.08 | .84 | 19.82* |
| **Paired learning and combined approach ($n = 17$)** | | | |
| **Pretest** | 3.57 | 1.29 | |
| **Posttest** | 4.02 | .96 | 5.09* |
| **Large group ($n = 25$)** | | | |
| **Pretest** | 3.68 | 1.1 | |
| **Posttest** | 4.01 | 1.04 | 4.75* |

$^{*}p < .05$

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Limitations of this study include the differences in the sample sizes for various age groups and instructional subgroups and the small size of the dropout pool. It is also recognized that the course must be seen as only one contributing factor to changes in academic self-esteem since the effects of the students' other college experiences during the semester could not be determined. Given these limitations, however, results from this study do support the hypothesis that, even without deliberate efforts at enhancement, a one-semester precollege reading course will lead to improvements in academic self-esteem for urban college students.

Following a semester of instruction focused primarily on improving reading abilities, students in precollege reading classes continue to have less confidence in their reading skills, particularly their ability to handle college-level reading assignments, as compared to the other aspects of academic self-esteem measured in this study. Use of more reality-based materials in these courses (i.e., college textbook chapters from academic subjects) would enable students to assess their progress and potential with this type of reading throughout the semester. Prior research (Feathers & Smith, 1983; Nist & Kirby, 1986) supports this conclusion and reports that the benefits of developmental courses for underprepared students is greatest when the reading and writing tasks in these courses closely resemble those that students will encounter in college-level courses. Turner (1992) found that study skills were most readily learned by college students when applied in realistic contexts.

Earlier researchers (Bean, 1982; Tinto, 1987) have claimed that persistence at college is affected by the successful match between the students and the institutions they attend, as well as by students' precollege experiences and characteristics. The present study suggests that students' academic self-esteem at the time of college entrance may be an additional influence on attrition. When students with weak academic records have high academic self-esteem, there is a mismatch between the students' expectations and actual academic achievement. This mismatch may increase chances for withdrawal from college. If academic self-esteem is assessed at the time of college entrance, students with mismatches between self-esteem and results on achievement or admission tests might be referred for counseling. College retention rates may improve as a result.

Woodard and Suddick (1992) found a positive correlation between self-esteem, academic success, and age. The present study indicates, however, that 21- to 24-year-olds who need literacy preparation for college have even lower academic self-esteem than do younger students with similar academic needs. We can only speculate as to why this may be so. It is likely that the life experiences of the 21- to 24-year-olds, during the years between high school graduation and their entrance to college, influenced their self-esteem. Lack of success in the workplace may have been the predominant impetus for this age group to attend college. If so, such work experience may have diminished their academic self-esteem from what it had been at the time of high school graduation. Further investigation in this area is needed.

It was also apparent from the results that instructional emphasis may influence the degree to which students' academic self-esteem is enhanced by an urban precollege reading course. Small group instruction demonstrated the greatest gains in questionnaire results. This conclusion is supported by previous research (Johnson & Johnson, 1989), which considers the benefits of cooperative learning in college classrooms. The peer support and approval afforded by this type of instruction, as well as the shift of control from faculty to student, may account for this benefit. Based on this study, faculty teaching academic literacy classes for underprepared college students may wish to consider the use of small group instruction as a primary teaching strategy. This finding of the facilitation of self-esteem by instructional type, however, does not suggest that instructional emphasis makes a difference in student reading performance at the end of one semester. Performance changes were not measured in this study.

Precollege reading courses play an important role in helping students to view themselves as learners. Evaluation designs for these courses should, therefore, include a measure that assesses the changes in student self-perception of academic ability and potential for success.

## APPENDIX A
## Survey of Academic Self-Esteem

Name ____________________________________________

Semester ________ What other courses are you taking this semester?

____________________________________________

____________________________________________

What courses, if any have you withdrawn from this semester?

____________________________________________

DIRECTIONS FOR ITEMS 1 THROUGH 20 BELOW: For each item, circle the number which you feel best describes you as you are now. (1 = not true of me at all; 5 = very true of me)

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I can successfully study for exams. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I can figure out what will be asked on tests. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I can use study time well. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I know how to study. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I know how to come prepared for class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I can take responsibility for my own studying. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I can balance my social life with my academic responsibilities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I am able to answer questions in a college classroom. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I am able to read a college textbook with understanding. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I know when to slow down my reading rate for better comprehension. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I know how to use context to get the meaning of unknown words in college level material. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I can make inferences when I read college level material. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. I am able to figure out the main ideas of college type reading materials (e.g., sociology, psychology, science). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14. I am able to handle difficult reading materials. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I am able to participate successfully in a college classroom. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. I am able to ask a professor for help when I have a question. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. I believe I will be admitted to the major of my choice. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. I believe I have a lot of knowledge to share with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. I believe I will graduate from college | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. I believe I will have a successful future. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## APPENDIX B
## Instructor Questionnaire

A.Which of the following types of materials do you use with your classes, and for what percentage of time is each used?

1. —Skills textbook
(may include some reading selections)
Percentage of time used:
— 5–15%
— 20–40%
— 40–60%
— 60–80%
— 80–100%

2. —Book of readings
(includes no skills instruction)
Percentage of time used:
— 5–15%
— 20–40%
— 40–60%
— 60–80%
— 80–100%

3. —Magazines
Percentage of time used:
—5–15%
—20–40%
—40–60%
—60–80%
—80–100%

4. —Newspapers
Percentage of time used:
— 5–15%
— 20–40%
— 40–60%
— 60–80%
— 80–100%

5. —Book of short reading passages
(only a few paragraphs, at most)
Percentage of time used:
—5–15%
—20–40%
—40–60%
—60–80%
—80–100%

6. —Novels
Percentage of time used:
— 5–15%
— 20–40%
— 40–60%
— 60–80%
— 80–100%

7. —Other (DESCRIBE)
Percentage of time used:
—5–15%
—20–40%
—40–60%
—60–80%
—80–100%

B. Which of the following instructional groups do you use, and for what percentage of time, out of your semester total, do you use each?

1. — Individual
   Percentage of time used:
   — 5–15%
   — 20–40%
   — 40–60%
   — 60–80%
   — 80–100%

2. — Paired learning (only 2 students)
   Percentage of time used:
   — 5–15%
   — 20–40%
   — 40–60%
   — 60–80%
   — 80–100%

3. — Small group (3 or more)
   Percentage of time used:
   — 5–15%
   — 20–40%
   — 40–60%
   — 60–80%
   — 80–100%

4. — Large group
   Percentage of time used:
   — 5–15%
   — 20–40%
   — 40–60%
   — 60–80%
   — 80–100%

5. — Other (DESCRIBE)
   Percentage of time used:
   — 5–15%
   — 20–40%
   — 40–60%
   — 60–80%
   — 80–100%

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# Evaluating Reader-Response Journals: A Coding System

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The pedagogical implications of the connections between reading and writing and writing and learning have made their way into classrooms (Bartholomae & Petrosky, 1986; Fulwiler, 1987; Knight, 1990; Newton, 1991). For example, in a college developmental reading classroom described by Bartholomae and Petrosky (1986), reader response journals were used as one of the writing situations presented to students. Students were expected to write about their reading on a regular basis and encouraged to go beyond the text for meaning.

The reading-writing-learning-from-text model used by Bartholomae and Petrosky (1986) provided the basis for a developmental reading course at a comprehensive midwestern university. This course uses natural texts (trade books read in their entirety) and relies heavily on the reading-writing connection. Students in this course are selected by testing from a pool of special admission applicants. Although these students can read, they read little. Most read words successfully but have difficulty in constructing meaning. Observation of students in this program for two years led us to believe that they have difficulty making connections—connections between paragraphs and chapters; between and among texts; and between prior knowledge, personal experience, speculative ideas, and text. Harste (1986) pointed out how important these connections were to good readers. In a study of journal entries written by graduate students about their reading, 69% of students' time was spent off the page attempting to make connections (Harste, 1986).

In order to assess and begin to shape these connections for our students, a method of coding journal entries was devised. The impact of coding journal entries for both teacher and student is described by Knight (1990). Coding can become an effective way to diagnose reading comprehension difficulties and to assess types of thinking that students already incorporate. Plans can then be made for extending comprehension on an individual basis through teacher response to and questions about journal entries.

## THE JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

Two instructors involved in this developmental reading program used different approaches to the journal assignment, although both used the same coding system. For this study, students were not exposed to the coding system. One instructor used an open-ended journal assignment (see Appendix A) that asked students to think beyond the text. Responses to journal entries by this instructor consisted of statements about the entries and questions designed to lead to higher levels of thinking about text. The second instructor gave a directed journal assignment (see Appendix B) consisting of questions and statements about the readings given as journal topics. Directions were designed to encourage students to respond at different levels. This instructor also guided students with statements and questions in response to their journal entries.

## THE CODING SYSTEM

Concern for monitoring student progress in reading led to the adoption of a coding system for journal entries. The system chosen was based on levels of student engagement with text and connections made between self and text, text and text, and the "world" and text. Levels assessed were (1) *telling* the story, (2) *relating* personal experiences or ideas to the text, (3) *evaluating* the text, (4) *questioning* the text, (5) *synthesizing* ideas across text, and (6) *speculating*. Both instructors tracked student progress by using the TREQ$S_1S_2$ coding system for these levels (see Appendix C) (Clery & Smith, 1992). Instructors recorded levels of response in student progress records but not in the journals themselves.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Analysis of journal entries was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. Was the proposed coding system one that could be understood and used by instructors in a college developmental reading course? To what degree did the codes "fit" the journal entries produced by the students?
2. Would there be a difference in levels of reader response in the journal entries by the two assignment conditions? Could the proposed coding system be used as effectively with an open-ended journal assignment as with a directed journal assignment?

## PROCEDURES

A study was designed to begin to answer these questions. Journals were collected from two sections of a college developmental reading course. Two instructors gave different types of journal assignments, open-ended and directed. Each group contained similar students drawn from the same pool of special admission applicants. Both groups read the same materials at approximately the same pace and were asked to write in their journals on a regular basis. The books read and written about in the course were (1) *New Americans* (Santoli, 1988), (2) *The Jungle* (Sinclair, 1906/1981), (3) *Working* (Terkel, 1989), (4) a book chosen by the student, (5) a student-written text about the theme of the course (The American Dream), and (6) *The Other America* (Harrington, 1981). Forty randomly selected journals, 20 from the open-ended journal condition and 20 from the directed journal condition, were coded by the two instructors at the end of the semester.

## ANALYSIS

Coders for the project were the two instructors in the college reading program who were familiar with the coding system. Journals contained no previous code markings. In a training session, several entries from 12 journals, 6 representing each condition, were read, evaluated, and discussed by both coders until agreement was reached.

Each journal was read and evaluated by each coder independently and results were compared. Only the highest level achieved on the TREQ$S_1S_2$ (Clery & Smith, 1992) scale was recorded for each entry for this study. Rater agreement was 89% on the 707 entries analyzed. There is a clear indication that this coding system lends itself to rating student journals with acceptable reliability. All disagreements were resolved by the coders through rereading and discussion.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Frequency counts for student responses at each coding level were subjected to a chi-square analysis. The results of the analysis are presented in the table. A significant overall difference in response patterns was detected between the total number of responses for the open-ended and the directed assignment groups.

Further analyses using the chi-square goodness of fit test for each coding level were done using a continuity correction factor as some groups contained frequencies lower than five (see the Table). Students given the open-ended assignment produced significantly more responses at the *relating* level and at the *questioning* level. Students in the directed assignment group, however, produced significantly more responses at the *synthesizing* level and at the *speculating* level.

The higher number of *relating* responses for the students given the open-ended assignment might be explained by the wording in the assignment for

**TABLE**
**Frequency of Responses for Each TREQSS Category**

| TREQSS Category | Open-ended assignment Expected | Open-ended assignment Observed | Directed assignment Expected | Directed assignment Observed | Chi-Square |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Telling | 117.65 | 110 | 105.35 | 113 | .920 |
| Relating | 23.21 | 38 | 20.79 | 6 | 18.620* |
| Evaluating | 122.93 | 130 | 110.07 | 103 | .743 |
| Questioning | 9.50 | 16 | 8.50 | 2 | 8.025* |
| Synthesizing | 34.82 | 24 | 31.18 | 42 | 6.474† |
| Speculating | 61.26 | 49 | 54.80 | 67 | 4.735† |
| Miscellaneous | 3.69 | 6 | 3.31 | 1 | 1.878 |
| Total (N = 707) | | 373 | | 334 | 46.595* |

* $p < .01$
† $p < .05$

all entries, "What experiences have you had that you can relate to what you're reading?" Students in the directed assignment group, on the other hand, might have responded at this level only when specifically asked to do so. The results for the *questioning* response seem to defy direct explanation. Perhaps students in the directed assignment group interpreted their entries as responses to questions and hesitated to ask questions about the questions.

If *synthesizing* and *speculating* are indeed higher levels of cognitive responses from readers, the differential level of response from the directed assignment group is an important finding. It seems that students benefited from directed questions when reaching for higher levels of responses from reading. This is consistent with research suggesting that typical college students do not use higher-order study strategies unless they are necessary or required (Crooks, 1988).

*Telling* and *evaluating* responses were similar in frequency for both assignment conditions with no significant differences found between groups. *Telling* and *evaluating* often seemed to be the default responses for students, judging by the number of times they occurred for both groups. It is interesting to note, however, that these two categories seemed to cause the major portion of coder disagreement. It was often difficult to differentiate these two levels, and this points to a need for clearer definitions as this process is revised and refined.

## CONCLUSIONS

One of the research questions focused on the usefulness of a coding system for analyzing student reader-response journals. The results of this study indicate that the coding system proposed is useful in that it is relatively easy to learn and that it does seem to fit or describe journal entries. Indeed, only 1%

of the total responses could not be assigned to one of these categories.

The second research question considered differences in reader response by the two different journal assignment conditions. Although there were differences in the frequencies of student responses for some levels under the two conditions, it appears that this coding system is applicable to both directed and open-ended assignments. Considering the differences in types of responses by students in this study, however, a combination of open-ended and directed assignments might have been the best solution for generating diversity in response.

Personal responses to the coding system, from the instructors who used it, have been positive. With this coding system, instructors have a method to assess comprehension based on student responses.

The present study also raised several questions. One that warrants further investigation is whether the coding system represents a hierarchy of development. For example, do individual students demonstrate a progression from *evaluating* to *speculating*? Observation leads us to believe that all of the levels are important, depending on the needs of the students, the goals of the reading assignment, and the nature of the reading material. Students who did best in the course were consistently able to respond to their reading at the synthesis and speculation levels and were also good at telling the story with many details. This points to the need for analysis of multiple levels represented within a single journal entry. The key, perhaps, is students' ability to be aware of their own response levels and to be purposefully flexible in using them.

A final thought relates to teaching the codes to students as a way to guide their own response to text. Knight (1990) writes, "coding journal entries permits the students to become more conscious of their process of reading and to feel more in control" (p. 47). Certainly, this is what we want for our students. Although we did not teach the codes to the students in this study, it is likely we will do so in the future. We believe that as students learn and use this type of coding system, they will develop better comprehension-monitoring strategies. Looking at student journals once they have been "let in on the secret" should be the next important step in this line of inquiry.

## APPENDIX A

### Example of a Reader-Response Journal Assignment

MATERIALS: Composition book (not loose leaf or spiral), pen (*no* pencils)
DIRECTIONS: As you read the material for this course—books, *Newsweek*, and other assigned readings—you will be writing responses to your reading in a journal. You are expected to make an entry in your journal each time you read, probably *four to five times each week*.

Your entries are your responses to what you have read. What was worthwhile and worth remembering? What was disappointing or confusing? What did you find to be interesting or thought provoking? What did you object to, if anything? What experiences have you had that you can relate to what you're reading? Have you ever read anything else that relates to what you're reading? The key to all of these responses is explaining *WHY*.

You may also include any other thoughts about the readings or the course to which you would like the instructor to respond.

Please do not spend time rewriting or recopying. Your first thoughts are as valid as your later, more well-developed thoughts.

AT THE TOP OF EACH ENTRY WRITE: THE DATE, NAME OF BOOK OR ARTICLE, PAGE NUMBERS.

GRADING: Journals need to be brought to class every day. They will be collected at random—you will not know ahead of time when they are to be collected. Points will be assigned each time your journal is turned in providing that it (1) is on time and (2) reflects adequate effort, including responses to the instructor's questions and comments. Points will be deducted accordingly.

## APPENDIX B

### Example of Topics for a Directed Journal Assignment

1. Respond to the situations of either Daud Nassery or Honey in *New Americans*. What is your reaction to their plights?
2. In *New Americans* why do the Patynas leave Poland and what is their hope for their future in America?
3. Do you admire Cha Ok Kim, the Peddler from *New Americans*? Why or why not?
4. How is *The Jungle* like *New Americans*? What do these two books have in common?
5. Give your opinion of your choice book. How are the issues in this book related to current events?
6. Now that you have completed the reading list from *Working*, reflect on at least two stories from the book that stand out in your mind for some reason. You may compare these stories to others you have read, or to personal experience.
7. What does Michael Harrington mean by "the other America"?

## APPENDIX C

### TREQSS Descriptions (Cleary & Smith, 1992)

T ***Telling** the story.* At this level the student is telling the story again or summarizing the story.

R ***Relating** personal experiences or ideas to the story.* At this level the student is forming relationships between the story and his or her own experiences. This is a very personal relationship.

E ***Evaluating** what was read.* At this level the student is evaluating the motives of the author and/or of the characters in the story. He or she is thinking and writing about why the story was written; why it was written in the way it was; why the characters, scenes, and descriptions are presented in the way they are.

Q ***Questioning** the story.* At this level the student is asking questions about the story (actually writing out those questions) and answering them based on what was read. The questions written and answered can help clarify confusing or difficult ideas.

S1 ***Synthesizing** of ideas across texts.* At this level the student is relating other reading to what is currently being read. Text relationships can occur between chapters in a book, between different books, between a book and a newspaper or magazine article. The possibilities are endless. Once a relationship is identified, it should be explained.

S2 ***Speculating.*** At this level the student is speculating about the impact of what was read on the broader community. He or she might think and write about the impact of this text on the community, on the nation and the world, or about the impact of this text on the other people reading it now or in the future.

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# Predicting *Nelson-Denny* Scores from the *SAT*

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Many college students are being required to enroll in remedial or developmental reading classes because it is believed that they are "at risk." The identification of these students is usually based upon low *ACT* or *SAT* test scores, low high school grade point averages, and/or poor performance on college placements tests. Typically, students are placed in remedial classes based on *SAT-Verbal* subtest scores (Malak & Hegeman, 1985) and then tested using the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test* as a measure of improvement (Nist & Hynd, 1985) to ensure that the inadequacies demonstrated on the *SAT-Verbal* subtest have been remediated.

The purpose of this investigation was to derive formulae for predicting the *Nelson-Denny* test scores from the *SAT* so that some type of placement decisions could be made based on the information available at the time of registration. This investigation utilized all subtest scores and total test scores from the *SAT* and the vocabulary and comprehension subtest scores and total test scores from the *Nelson-Denny*.

The logic for this procedure has been supported by previous research investigations. Garrett's (1949) correlational research with Forms A and B of the *Nelson-Denny* and *College Entrance Examination Board* tests yielded coefficients ranging from .27 to .64. Malak and Hegeman (1985) reported a correlation of .70 between the *SAT-Verbal* and *Nelson-Denny (Form C)*. Wood (1990) reported correlation between the *Nelson-Denny (Form E)* total, vocabulary, comprehension scores, and the *SAT-Verbal* score to be .77, .78, and .58, respectively.

## TEST DESCRIPTIONS

The *SAT-Verbal* measures verbal abilities through two 30-minute tests of vocabulary, verbal reasoning, and reading comprehension and one 30-minute test of recognition and usage of standard written English (Cohn, 1985; College Board, 1981).

The most frequently used *SAT* test score to determine whether or not students should be enrolled in remedial or developmental reading classes is the verbal subtest score (*SATV*) of the *SAT* (Malak & Hegeman, 1985). This section includes antonyms, analogies, sentence completions (ability to understand the point of a sentence and how the ideas are related), and reading comprehension (Weber, 1986). Subtest scores are provided for the reading comprehension (comprehension and sentence completion items) and vocabulary sections (antonyms and analogies). The subtest scores are reported on a scale ranging from 20–80 (Cohn, 1985).

*The Test of Standard Written English* (*TSWE*) has usage questions and error corrections. The usage questions consist of a sentence with four words or phrases underlined, and one phrase at the end labeled "no error." The error correction items consist of a sentence with a portion of the sentence underlined (sometimes the whole sentence is underlined). Students decide which is the correct, clear, and concise way to write the underlined portion of the sentence. Scores are reported as a two-digit number.

There are three subtests of the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test*, one of which, reading rate, was not used in this study. The vocabulary section consists of 50 prefixed and 50 nonprefixed multiple-choice items. The vocabulary words are accompanied by some context but not enough to allow students to use the context to determine the meaning of the words. Raw scores range from 0–100. The comprehension test consists of eight passages accompanied by 18 literal and 18 inferential multiple-choice questions. These scores range from 0–72. Total test score ranges from 0–172.

## METHOD

The subjects for this investigation were 262 college freshmen, 152 females and 110 males, who were required to enroll in semester-long remedial reading courses at a midwestern university. The requirement for enrollment was based on the reading comprehension subtest score (less than 30) on the *SAT*.

Subjects were tested at the beginning of the fall semester using the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test (Form E)*. The regular administration directions were followed: 15 minutes to complete the vocabulary subtest and 20 minutes to complete the comprehension subtest. Vocabulary, reading comprehension, and total scores were recorded. Students' *SAT* scores were recorded from their university records as follows: *SAT Verbal*, *SAT Math*, *SAT Combined*, Reading Comprehension subtest, the Vocabulary subtest, and the *TSWE*. Students had taken the *SAT* as juniors or seniors in high school. Although there was no way to identify how many times each student had taken the *SAT*, Worthen, Borg, and White (1993) suggest that intervals of up to one year may not be unreasonable for "tests of intelligence or other traits" (p. 148).

Descriptive statistics for the subtest scores and test scores were calculated. Stepwise regression equations were used to determine prediction formulae. This procedure was selected because previous research had used only total test scores from the *SATV*, the *Nelson-Denny*, or both. Since no previous investigation had used subtest scores, there was no way to determine which subtests would enter into the prediction formulae. The stepwise procedure enters the most highly correlated variable into the equation first and then continues to add those variables that significantly contribute to the prediction equation. Thus, the final prediction equation is one that consists of only those variables that contribute significantly to the equation.

## RESULTS

The means and minimum and maximum scores, and standard deviations for all tests and subtests are reported in Table 1. Using the *Nelson-Denny* Total Score as the dependent variable, only the *SATV* and the *TSWE* significantly contributed to the prediction equation. This equation accounts for 23% of the variance, with *SATV* accounting for 17% and *TSWE* accounting for 6% ($p < .05$). No other variable met the significance criteria ($p < .05$) ( for entry into the model.

When the *Nelson-Denny* Vocabulary Score was used as the dependent variable, the *TSWE* entered into the equation first, accounting for 19% of the variance. The second score that entered into the prediction equation was the *SAT* vocabulary subtests, which accounted for 7% of the variance. No other variable met the significance level for entry into the model.

With the *Nelson-Denny* Comprehension Score as the dependent variable, the first variable that entered the prediction equation was the *TSWE*, accounting for 7% of the variance. The *SATV* was entered into the equation next,

**TABLE 1**
**Simple Statistics:** ***Scholastic Aptitude Test*** **and** ***Nelson-Denny Reading Test***

| | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *SAT–Verbal* | 290.8 | 38.47 | 200.0 | 390.0 |
| *SAT–Math* | 385.3 | 80.1 | 220.0 | 650.0 |
| *SAT–Combined* | 676.1 | 96.9 | 420.0 | 960.0 |
| *SAT–Reading* | 26.9 | 3.45 | 20.0 | 39.0 |
| *SAT–Vocabulary* | 31.9 | 6.17 | 20.0 | 50.0 |
| *SAT–TSWE* | 31.6 | 7.39 | 20.0 | 57.0 |
| *Nelson-Denny* Vocabulary | 35.79 | 9.59 | 10.0 | 67.0 |
| *Nelson-Denny* Comprehension | 38.37 | 10.13 | 12.0 | 72.0 |
| *Nelson-Denny* Total | 74.11 | 16.53 | 29.0 | 121.0 |

accounting for 2% of the variance. No other variable met the significance criteria for entry into the model. Formulae and standard errors of estimate for all three equations are reported in Table 2.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this investigation was to derive formulae (using all subtests of the *SAT*) for predicting *Nelson-Denny* test scores. The inclusion of all subtests of the *SAT* yielded some interesting results. All three prediction equations include the *Test of Standard Written English* scores. In the prediction equations for *Nelson-Denny* comprehension and vocabulary, the *TSWE* entered first into the equation, accounting for most of the explained variance (7% for comprehension, 19% for vocabulary). The *TSWE* entered second into the prediction equation for the *Nelson-Denny* Total Score, accounting for 6% of the variance. Additional research that thoroughly investigates the nature of the *TSWE* and its relation to reading comprehension is called for.

The amount of variance accounted for by the prediction equations is 23% (predicted *Nelson-Denny* Total Score), 26% (predicted *Nelson-Denny* Vocabulary Score), and 9% (predicted *Nelson-Denny* Comprehension Score). These moderate to low effect sizes raise doubts about the usefulness of the *SAT* to predict adequately *Nelson-Denny* test scores or the usefulness of the *SAT* to suggest anything about reading comprehension. This notion supports the claims made by Farr, Courtland, and Beck (1984) that the *SAT* was not designed for the purpose of determining overall literacy development and that *SAT* scores provide little direct information about students' reading achievement. Wood (1990) takes this claim a step further by suggesting that the *SAT* adds very little to the prediction equation of college grades if high school grades are available.

Although it may be important to make decisions about placement in remedial reading courses, it seems more important to investigate the means by which such decisions are made. Webb (1983) suggested that tests used to assess college students' reading ability needed to be evaluated more rigorously. Although his research is dated, the criteria used to evaluate college-level reading tests can be used to prompt similar investigations with updated tests.

Additionally, although it is generally assumed that there is an abundance of

**TABLE 2**
**Prediction Equations**

*Nelson-Denny* Predicted Total Score = 19.12 + .12(*SATV*) + .61(*TSWE*)
Standard error of estimate = 14.61

*Nelson-Denny* Predicted Vocabulary Score = 8.07 + .46(*SAT*) + .41(*TSWE*)
Standard error of estimate = 8.28

*Nelson-Denny* Predicted Comprehension Score = 16.17 + .05(*SATV*) + .26(*TSWE*)
Standard Error of estimate = 9.66

research explicating the relationship between the *Nelson-Denny* and the *SAT*, the reality of the matter is that such research does not exist. The nature of the relationship between the *Nelson-Denny* and *SAT* must be examined more closely. For now, caution must be exhibited in making any type of reading placement decisions based on *SAT* test scores.

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# INQUIRIES IN LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN CLINICS AND CLASSROOMS

# University Reading Clinics: Changing Focus for Changing Needs

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The development of university reading clinics closely follows the development of reading instruction in this country. The "scientific" view of reading that came out of the early 1930s began a look for differentiated instruction for children of differing abilities. By the late 1930s clinics were appearing in universities to provide services to groups of "remedial" readers (Allington, 1991). The growth and development of basal skill hierarchies in the 1950s and 1960s were instrumental in creating a greater need for instructional support for those children who were not successful in proceeding through these hierarchies. With improved psychometric tools available, children with reading and learning disabilities were more easily and more quickly identified. University clinics expanded their services to meet these new needs.

With the growth of the whole language movement and the interest in naturalistic assessment during the 1980s, the role of the university clinic would be expected to change. A look at surveys conducted during this period (Bader & Wiesendanger, 1986; Bates, 1984; Irvin & Lynch-Brown, 1988) revealed that while some things have changed, much has remained the same. Even as late as 1988, Irvin & Lynch-Brown found that many clinics still administered skills-based assessment instruments and continued to isolate reading instruction from the areas of speaking, listening, and writing.

Recently, university reading clinics have been challenged to adapt to the changing needs of the communities and schools with which they work (Sanacore, 1991). Clinics should strive to work closely with schools to provide congruence and consistency in assessment and instruction. Additionally, parents should be encouraged to become active partners in their child's reading and writing instruction and assessment.

Some clinics are already exploring new ways to utilize their resources to provide a variety of new opportunities and services to children, parents, and schools. This paper presents three examples of such changes. The first is a program in which parents received instruction in various reading strategies and then used these strategies when working with their own children. The use of new technologies related to assessment and management of clinic resources is outlined in the second example. Finally, an interdisciplinary approach for assessment and service is illustrated.

## PARENTS AS PARTNERS IN INSTRUCTION

Studies in this country and abroad (Johnston, 1989; Pellegrini, Perlmutter, Galda, & Brody, 1990; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1989) have indicated that active participation by parents through such activities as reading aloud to their child or having the child read to the parent has resulted in improved reading in school by the children. Involving the parents of children who have been unsuccessful in school is especially important. These children often have low self-esteem, which compounds their need for positive input from parents. Parents sometimes feel ill-equipped to provide the help they think their child requires. The university parent program described here addressed these concerns by providing a support group for parents, actual instruction in reading strategies, and opportunities for the parent to implement those strategies with their own children.

The children were enrolled in a reading tutoring program at a large university in a southwestern state. They were tutored by undergraduate students who were enrolled in an assessment course. During the 10 one-hour sessions, tutors modeled and facilitated the use of specific reading strategies for the children.

Parents of these children were invited to participate in a series of eight parental seminars, directed by the clinic's reading specialist, held while the children were tutored. The purpose of these seminars was two-fold. First, parents' questions and concerns were addressed in group discussions: ways to encourage reading and writing, how to communicate with teachers, and how to select books. Second, various reading strategies were demonstrated to the parents; these same strategies were being utilized by the tutors. Strategies included webbing, story mapping, KWL, vocabulary development, identification of words through context, and responding to books in journals. Parents were requested to use the strategies with their own children during the week and to keep reflections about the usefulness of the strategy in journals. The journal entries became a catalyst for the next week's discussion.

The program can best be described by focusing on one parent/child team. Billy was a a third grade student whose private school teacher described him as bright but not achieving at his expected levels. He was the picture of perfection in his dress and manner, and he wanted his work to be perfect too.

Unfortunately, his work was often indecipherable and unorganized, and he stumbled over words when he read. Because he realized that his reading was less than perfect, he was initially reluctant to attempt to read new stories. His mother, Cathy, was very successful in her field of work; Billy thought she was the perfect person. She was very concerned about Billy's school work and wanted to provide every opportunity for him to succeed.

As the term progressed, Billy became more secure with the tutor and more willing to take risks. His mother learned new techniques and strategies to use when she read with Billy at home. One suggestion for parents was to model how they figured out words they did not know. When Cathy modeled this with Billy, he was surprised and said, "I didn't know mothers could have trouble with words." This was a breakthrough for the reading relationship between Billy and his mother. She reported that Billy was more willing to take risks and to try various strategies when they worked together.

Billy's teacher invited the reading specialist to observe Billy at school and to make recommendations for school instruction that would assist his reading growth. Billy's school was a private Montessori school, and he was allowed a great deal of freedom in selecting tasks. Since Billy liked math and science, he usually chose these activities. Language arts and reading activities were selected less often. His work in those areas was similar to the work he had done at the university clinic, and his teacher verified that he was reluctant to take risks or to contribute to class activities.

At the end of the semester of tutoring sessions, Billy, his mother, and his teacher felt that Billy had progressed in his willingness to try a variety of strategies in his language arts and reading work and in his enthusiasm for reading-related tasks. He was more willing to accept help from others and was beginning to understand that perfection is not necessarily the goal of reading and writing.

The parent seminars offered opportunities to make links between the clinic and the home and between the clinic and the school. This was true not only for Cathy and Billy, but also for the other parents and children who participated in the clinic programs.

## SOFTWARE IN THE READING CLINIC—ASSESSMENT

The amount and types of software available for schools and clinics have increased dramatically in the last decade. Software for computer-assisted instruction and computer-managed instruction is readily available. Although software to assist with assessment is available, it is limited. An excellent resource for locating assessment software is *Psychware Sourcebook* (Krug, 1987), published by Test Corporation of America, which provides a listing and description of software in many areas of assessment. Publishers and addresses for the software described below are included in the appendix at the end of this article.

An early software program for reading assessment is the *Computer Assisted Reading Assessment* (CARA) program, available through Southern Micro Systems.

As with most of the assessment software available, the CARA uses the results of tests administered by a teacher/clinician. The teacher/clinician can input information about the student's background, such as primary language, sibling information, auditory and visual discrimination ability, learning style, or the results of an informal reading inventory. CARA generates a report that provides the teacher/clinician information about the student's reading ability. The tables generated include information from the informal reading inventory and miscue analysis. CARA has the same limitation as most other computer-generated reports: It can only analyze quantitative data. CARA can provide a starting point, however, for a more in-depth report that takes qualitative information into account.

*Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children—ASSIST* is test interpretation software that utilizes raw scores from the *Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children. ASSIST* stands for *A*utomated *S*coring and *I*nterpreting *S*tandardized *T*ests. Using the raw scores, the software generates a report that includes a profile of the student's strengths and weaknesses. The program is available for the Apple II from American Guidance Service.

*ASSIST* is also available for the *Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests,* using a format similar to the Kaufman. Raw scores are used to obtain reading levels, percentile ranks, and so on. This program is also available for the Apple II from American Guidance Service.

Interpretation software is also available for the *Test of Language Development* (TOLD). As with the CARA, this software takes the data gathered from a teacher/clinician administration of the test. After this information is entered, the software generates a four-page report, which includes raw scores, standard scores, and percentiles. This software is available for the primary and intermediate forms of the TOLD from PRO-ED.

There are many programs available for the interpretation of the *WISC-R.* Southern Micro Systems has published two, *Wisc-R "Basic"* and *Wisc-R "Complete." Wisc-R "Basic"* is designed to generate a three- to four-page report of subtests, verbal scale achievement, and performance scale achievement. Mathematics, reading, and spelling scores may be entered to obtain a comparative analysis. The software includes a resource book of educational recommendations.

*Wisc-R "Complete"* generates a six- to seven-page report. The report provides information including severe discrepancy levels between verbal, performance, and full-scale IQ as well as reasons for subtest scaled scores not on expected level. The *Wisc-R "Basic"* and *Wisc-R "Complete"* are both available for the Apple II and IBM PC systems.

The main weakness with these software programs is that they cannot bring the knowledge and experience of an experienced teacher/clinician to the report writing. The value of the interpretation software is that it may locate relationships between variables that eluded the teacher/clinician. Although software analyses can enhance diagnostic evaluations, the results should always be used along with teacher/clinician-generated qualitative data.

## MULTIDISCIPLINARY CLINICAL ASSESSMENT

The clinical assessment at one large university in a southwestern state demonstrates how cooperation among different disciplines can produce a fuller view of a child. When a child is referred to this clinic for assessment of academic difficulty, information is gathered by professionals from three different disciplines: speech and hearing, reading, and counseling. Information about the child's abilities in each area is gathered through half-day assessments. Additional information regarding academic performance and classroom behavior is supplied by the child's school. During this day and a half assessment, a tremendous amount of information is accumulated about the child. Preliminary analyses are made in each of the three specialty areas.

Before any final judgments are made, staff from the three disciplines hold a meeting to compare and discuss these preliminary findings. As information is shared, patterns of behavior and ability often become apparent. Frequently, the view of the child from one perspective helps to clarify a confusing picture of the child from another viewpoint. By sharing these data and by discussing the ramifications of coinciding as well as conflicting information, an overall determination about a major area of concern is established.

The evaluations are then shared with parents in a follow-up meeting. Representatives of each of the academic disciplines share the major points of their findings. The parents are also advised of the areas identified as being of the highest concern. All this is detailed in written reports that are sent to the parents.

The process can best be described by following the testing procedures for a particular child. Andy was a third grade boy who was brought to the clinic because his mother was concerned about his difficulty in school. He had received resource assistance the previous year, but Andy's mother believed that he was still doing very poorly. Additionally, she expressed concern about the possibility that Andy might have Attention Deficit Disorder.

Andy's assessments in speech and hearing revealed a deficit in language use. He appeared to have no clear comprehension of time words such as "yesterday" or "tomorrow." His mechanical production of language appeared to be fine, as were his hearing and articulation. The preliminary evaluation from speech and hearing was a recommendation for language tutoring.

When Andy was assessed in reading, he demonstrated a very poor attitude toward reading. It appeared that he could read independently at only the primer level; therefore, he was certainly performing far below his third grade placement. His miscues in oral reading showed nearly all focus on initial letters or sounds with no other reading strategies evident. He was intent and focused when allowed to draw, but otherwise appeared very distractable. The preliminary finding from reading was to reevaluate Andy's placement in resource or Chapter I reading so that he would be receiving the best possible reading support at school and at home.

Andy's counseling assessments revealed a number of important elements. The ADD screening showed that this was not a concern. Serious parental stress factors were apparent, and it appeared that clear boundaries in behavior issues were lacking. There were also a number of control issues involved. The preliminary finding in counseling was a recommendation for parent and child counseling.

The joint meeting uncovered many interesting factors. Andy's parents had never married. His only sibling, a 17-year-old brother, was living with the father. The mother appeared to be very anxious about being a good parent to eight-year-old Andy. Andy spent every summer in Mexico with relatives. Andy's best, and possibly only, friend was in Little League with him. There was tremendous conflict between Andy and his mother about his quitting Little League suddenly and then changing his mind about going. The mother talked about following Andy into the bathroom with his school books, trying to make him work on homework while he was taking a bath.

The overall picture became much clearer after the testing information was shared from the three different perspectives. The primary area of concern was to address the stress evident in the home by guiding both Andy and his mother with parent and child counseling. The reading difficulties were recognized as extremely important, but the multidisciplinary staff believed that addressing the parenting issues first would be more helpful for Andy. It was recommended that Andy continue in a special program in school that would address his reading difficulty and that his mother be guided in how to assist his literacy development at home. The language deficits, as revealed in the speech and hearing tests, were believed to be of minimal importance.

If there had only been information about Andy from one of the three areas, the picture of Andy and his abilities would have been seriously limited and skewed. By conducting assessments in the three areas and jointly evaluating how each area of his life affected the others, a more effective assessment was made.

## SUMMARY

University reading clinics can still benefit children who have experienced difficulties within the regular classroom reading program. However, clinic services must adapt to the changing needs of these students and their parents. This paper described three ways of meeting these needs. Clinics may need to offer more opportunities for parent education and parent participation in reading instruction. In addition, clinics may need to look for more and better ways to learn about children and their learning and instructional needs through multidisciplinary diagnosis or through working more closely with schools. Learning about these needs is facilitated by new technologies and computer programs, which also allow more time for the teacher/clinician to provide appropriate instruction for the child. As in the past, providing appropriate instruction remains the ultimate goal of university reading clinics.

## APPENDIX

Computer Assisted Reading Assessment
Southern Micro Systems
716 E. Davis St.
Burlington, North Carolina 27215

Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children—ASSIST
AMerican Guidance Service
Publishers Building
Circle Pines, Minnesota 55014

Test of Language Development (TOLD)
PRO-ED
5341 Industrial Oaks Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78735-8898

WISC-R "Basic" and WISC-R "Complete"
Southern Micro Systems
716 E. Davis St.
Burlington, North Carolina 27215

Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests—ASSIST
American Guidance Service
Publisher's Building
Circle Pines, Minnesota 55014

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# Expanding the Use of Picture Storybooks With Older Readers

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Picture storybooks can be used with children of all ages (and also adults) in ways that help students discover many important and enjoyable aspects of literacy. I explored the possibilities of using picture storybooks with older children when I returned to the fifth grade classroom. After graduate education in reading, I entered the inner city school where I had previously taught to collaborate with one of the classroom teachers in order to enhance reading and writing instruction through the use of literature. The use of storybooks was one of our most successful strategies.

To clarify what is meant by the term *storybook*, Hall (1990) states that "the picture storybook...is a blend of text and illustration in which the two elements are of equal importance" and work together as the story unfolds (p. 11). White (1975) also provides a structural description of this type of book, which includes some of the following criteria: it is a fiction story, it consists of only one tale, it includes a recognizable plot, and it has no imposed vocabulary restrictions.

Unfortunately, older students and many of their teachers have neglected this category of books thinking that the format of limited text and numerous illustrations reserves them for infants and young students. It is becoming increasingly clear that the authors and publishers of these books do not agree with such age limits. In the last several years, more picture storybooks have emerged that explore serious and complicated subjects. For example, *Let the Celebrations Begin* (Wild, 1991) takes place in a concentration camp. Books like this use both text and illustrations to convey information that would be missed by less sophisticated readers.

The fifth grade class with which I became involved was a diverse group of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and of varying reading abilities. The classroom teacher and I, in looking for approaches to interest students, introduced picture storybooks with much success. When we began using these books regularly as part of our instruction, we realized that the storybooks were effective for teaching many literacy areas. Yet many teachers or even literature experts still do not recognize the usefulness of picture storybooks for this age group. A recent text used in the children's literature class at our university claims that picture storybooks are meant for young children (Russell, 1991). The same text gives very little information about how to use these books in an instructional setting. Another book provides a wonderful guide to picture books, but promotes itself as a "guide to more than 4,400 picture books for preschool children through second graders" (Lima, 1982, p. x). A teacher wrote to me recently stating that after 15 years of teaching, her experience indicated that older children shun picture books because they think of them as "baby books," and she suggested that there is no research to support the premise I propose. The body of research in this area may be limited, but it is growing as more educators participate in experiences similar to those I describe here (Fedorko, 1992; Neal & Moore, 1991; Rief, 1992).

In this article, I will present a rationale for using storybooks with older readers, followed by examples of this use with fifth grade students. I will conclude with ideas concerning the reasons storybooks appeared successful here and with other older readers. It is hoped that this will provide encouragement for further exploration of this approach by more educators.

## THEORETICAL SUPPORT AND RATIONALE FOR USAGE WITH OLDER READERS

In 1984, Driessen reported on some fifth graders' response to picture books, saying that they enjoyed the books, even though their responses were somewhat arrested since they had not read them in several years. Driessen (1984) stated that certain picture books are appropriate for fifth grade students, contributing to their literary and artistic awareness, as well as language and reading development. Other studies have demonstrated junior high or middle school students' positive response to picture books (Danielson, 1992; Johnson-Weber, 1989).

Based on recommendations that students should participate in many authentic reading and writing tasks (Goodman, 1986) and be allowed choice in such tasks (Atwell, 1987), the case evolves for picture storybooks. Most educators believe these books are worthy examples of good literature (Ludlam, 1992; Neal & Moore, 1991; Newkirk, 1992; Rief, 1992). Although longer texts are often seen as an indicator of complexity and importance, texts with fewer words must be written with great precision providing an eloquent conciseness of their own. Often such brevity requires more inferential thinking and presents manageable reading for students. Illustrations often add extra motivation for them as well as enhancing the story text.

These books also provide students with important models for their own writing tasks (Heard, 1992; McCoy & Hammett, 1992; Newkirk, 1992; Rief, 1992). Students do not expand their writing to novel-length pieces as they get older, but instead they write short stories, essays, and poems. Picture storybooks more closely match these writing efforts and provide students with ideas for experimenting with written language.

Using picture books in a variety of reading and writing tasks allows students to participate more easily in the literacy community. Several students can read the same book and participate in discussion groups. The short texts take less time to read but still have the potential to elicit thoughtful discussion and speculation (Newkirk, 1992; Rynerson, 1992). Picture book topics often lead to further exploration of ideas or exposure to other classroom subject areas (Brazee, 1992; Carlisle, 1992). This allows students to imagine and understand some concepts that they might never research if they were presented with a more difficult or lengthy text for the information. The creative use of these books can make explicit the important connections between reading and writing (Noyce & Christie, 1989).

## SETTING UP THE USE OF STORYBOOKS

Picture storybooks were introduced to our fifth graders during a reading and writing workshop format similar to that suggested by Atwell (1987) and described more recently by Reutzel and Cooter (1991) and Swift (1993). The workshop format, which began at the first of the school year, included the following elements: introductory minilesson, individual reading and writing time, group collaboration and interaction opportunities, and sharing of literacy products with the entire class.

Each workshop began with a minilesson that often included a picture storybook to illustrate the intended point and to provide a motivational reading time for the students. At first, the intent was to vary the minilessons with many types of reading materials, but picture storybooks proved so successful that they became the primary texts used. Initially, this success was evident to us because we were able to explain clearly concepts as complex as story plot and climax by using a book like *Strega Nona* (de Paola, 1975) and also have students maintain high interest during the explanation. Later we found successful application by students as they recognized plot and climax in other stories they read and incorporated this knowledge into their own organization for story writing.

During lessons, books were read aloud to the students, allowing them to hear the language of the stories. These stories were made available for them to read on their own (along with other types of books) during the remainder of the workshop time. Students desired to look at these storybooks further and did so often, sharing discoveries with their peers.

Time restrictions meant selecting shorter books to illustrate points quickly. The lessons emphasized ideas that we wanted the students to learn (e.g., story grammar elements), and books were selected accordingly. The characteristics of the picture storybooks allowed for many uses that were meaningful to the students. We introduced books carefully, especially at first, giving reasons for looking at these "easy" stories. With a purpose established (e.g., character development, one of my favorite authors) students accepted this type of literature. After hearing a few stories, they enjoyed them without reservation. Although this "set-up" may be important when introducing picture storybooks with older readers, it is not always necessary. In a preservice tutoring course at our university, many tutors have discovered that they can use picture books successfully with their older students. One tutor told me that she had expected to introduce her picture book with care for her student to accept reading it, but instead he was immediately interested. Many of our tutors have had similar experiences. This acceptance is evident by student comments like this one: "I like to sit on the floor to get ideas from the books you read."

## INSTRUCTION WITH STORYBOOKS

We focused on several areas, including story grammar elements during minilessons. In one lesson, students heard *Make Way for Ducklings* (McCloskey, 1941), which led to a discussion about setting, accompanied by photographs of Boston scenes. As already mentioned, *Strega Nona* (de Paola, 1975) was used to show how a problem occurs in the story and events lead to a climax and resolution of the problem. To illustrate this, students arranged story events on a graph indicating moments of greater action within the plot. *Miss Rumphius* (Cooney, 1982) clearly demonstrated a story theme that is repeated throughout the text.

We also examined different genre during lessons. By using picture storybooks, several stories could be introduced in a short period of time. When discussing folktales and fairy tales, such as *The Three Little Pigs*, several versions were available including the interesting perspective in *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* (Scieszka, 1989). This allowed for comparisons among these books, which stimulated rich discussions.

Author studies formed another focus of the lessons. Since we used shorter books, many authors could be quickly compared. Some of these authors also wrote books aimed at older children that the students were then motivated to read. For example, after hearing *The Giving Tree* (Silverstein, 1964), students began reading Silverstein's poetry. This led the students to write poetry as well.

Several other kinds of student writing developed from these books. Students were inspired by story ideas in books like *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (Viorst, 1972). About half the class chose to write on a variation of this story. A couple of sample segments follow:

> One Monday morning when Christy woke up she was feeling great. But when Christy got out of bed that's when it all happened! When she went to shut her drawer she shut her finger in her drawer. Then when she went down stairs she tripped over her brother's skateboard....
>
> It was a wonderful day for me well that's what I thought when all of the sudden I fell on the bathroom floor. Next I got toothpaste in my hair. I was on my way to school when I fell down the stairs. When I got to school my homework was all reaped [*sic*] up. So the teacher called my mother.... When I wanted to play a game nobody wanted to play with me so I just layed down and took a nap.

Many students were also interested in the illustrations within picture storybooks; some began to develop their stories into "published" books complete with illustrations, which engaged children whose previous interest in reading was limited but who liked to draw. Integration with art was then a natural process also. One talented student wrote a collection of poetry, which he illustrated beautifully.

Besides the model for topics that these books provided, students experimented with various styles and elements of writing based on the varied texts. One student attempted to include figurative or exaggerated language within his stories as it was used in the tall tales that he had read. He wrote, "When I woke up I was so excited I could have jumped through the roof...." A few students attempted the rhyme or rhythmic pattern sometimes used in the stories. This experimentation allowed students to develop their own writing style as well as to become more aware of such elements in stories they read.

"Bill's" story illustrates the power of this experience for children. I first thought of Bill as a puzzle. At the beginning of the year, he started to write some interesting things, but he would then scribble them out or they would disappear completely. For a while he would hardly do anything. We recognized this as uncertainty rather than laziness. He appeared to be developing a lot of ideas as he read picture storybooks, chapter books, and magazines. He then began a phase of experimentation in his writing, trying to include such elements as figurative language. It was clear that he was noticing more literacy elements in the materials he read, but he was still unsure about applying them to his written work, causing him not to complete any of his writing. He began to share his work, but only with me, and I gave encouragement or advice whenever possible. After a minilesson using a story grammar chart along with a couple of picture storybooks, we discussed how this was like a story "plan." Bill thought he could now plan and complete a story. He finally did this during the next workshop day. Not only was he now learning to make some reading and writing connections but also he seemed to be enjoying it. He wrote to me the week after completing his story saying, "When I heard you were coming to our class I thought it would be boring. But you proved me wrong."

## CONCLUSIONS

As the first few months of the workshop passed, there were indications that the picture storybooks had motivational and instructional value for these students.

Evidence appeared as we observed and interviewed students during the workshop time and examined related checklists and writing samples. Several reasons for the success of these books emerged, as outlined below.

First, older students in general enjoy and benefit from picture storybooks, especially when books are selected carefully for reasons that will be appealing to such an audience. Books with carefully crafted illustrations, highly appealing story plots, or more sophisticated themes provide older students with a springboard for further reading and writing, as when the fifth grade students desired to read and write more poetry. Discussions about the brief stories can lead to the development of critical thinking skills, applications to longer texts, and creativity. With careful introduction into the classroom, students accept picture storybooks as legitimate types of literature and cease to find them "babyish." Many of our fifth grade students expressed their enjoyment for this type of literature: "I loved the stories you read us like my favorite one *Strega Nona.*"

Second, picture storybooks can enhance reading instruction. Through the use of minilessons, designed to be brief class meetings addressing literacy issues, many books were introduced for different purposes. Hall (1990) describes ways that picture storybooks can be used to teach literary devices such as foreshadowing, imagery, and point of view. The concise stories allow for the elements to be emphasized and highlighted. The storybooks are also useful for presenting different types of genres, as well as contributing to an integration with other subjects.

Third, books used to examine authors' styles lead very naturally into writing. The books are good models for the short stories that students often attempt to write. Students may experiment with authors' writing patterns or topics to start stories of their own. This works well in the workshop format we used, which allows students to make choices about their writing products. When some of our students decided to write about their "very bad day," it was so motivating that students who had hated the whole idea of writing were able to vent some of their frustrations through this topic; they kept writing from then on.

Fourth, picture storybooks are especially supportive and motivating for older students with reading difficulties or low interest in reading. One student expressed it this way, "Thank you for... teaching us more about books and how to write books. With your help I found out how important they are. I always thought books weren't important and books were boring,... but I was wrong." The books often have predictable text that helps the students develop fluency and confidence, enabling rereading. The pictures provide additional cues when students encounter more difficult text, encouraging better comprehension.

Fifth, older students from low SES backgrounds, who had limited exposure to these books when younger, enjoyed the opportunity to explore the treasures that they missed. Yet there was also a murmur of excitement when I pulled out familiar books. Students are easier to motivate with such materials, leading to success in other reading and writing activities. An added advantage is that many of the books explore diversity issues. Our students were particularly intrigued by the McKissacks, who wrote such books as *Mirandy and Brother Wind* (1988), since these authors had grown up in the neighborhood around our school.

Sixth, students find many authentic reasons to read picture books that serve their individual purposes. Some have younger siblings; others are involved in "buddy" projects with younger students. Finding appealing picture books for these younger students and preparing to read them well gives older students a feeling of confidence and importance. Other reasons for using storybooks may be to adapt the shorter text into a skit to perform, to examine and compare illustrators in an effort to illustrate personal work for publication, to interact socially about literature in attempts to share entertaining items, or to find examples that provide information in areas of interest or research.

The appealing format of the picture storybooks captured older students' attention and helped them to explore reading and writing further. This is important information for educators to pass on. We can use picture storybooks to develop many aspects of reading and language expression in ways that do not diminish the enjoyment of the books but support literacy development within the context of real literature. As one student wrote, "You changed how I feel about reading." It is important that educators begin to use this rich source of literature available to them.

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# Impact of Purpose-Setting Questions on Children's Book Discussions

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With the increased use of literature to teach reading, the presentation and discussion of literature with children has become a focus of many investigations (e.g., Cullinan, Harwood, & Galda, 1983; Eeds & Wells, 1989; Green & Harker, 1982; Green, Harker, & Golden, 1986; Hickman, 1981; Martinez & Teale, 1989). Much of this research is informed by the view that reading literature is a literary experience that involves the reader, the author, and the text (Rosenblatt, 1983). Words of the author remain "inkspots on paper" (Rosenblatt, 1983, p.25) until readers, based on their own experiences and reading release the voice of the author. A "live circuit" is created by the author, reader, and text.

Rosenblatt (1983) describes two kinds of reading: efferent and esthetic. Efferent reading occurs when one reads to extract particular information, and esthetic reading happens when one reads and experiences a story. Rosenblatt cautions that some who use literature to teach reading may insulate students from a work because of what they stress.

For years, traditional reading instruction has been guided by lesson formats such as the Directed Reading Activity (Betts, 1946). Prereading activities designed to enhance readers' comprehension of the text are characteristic of these formats. These prereading activities frequently conclude with the teacher asking a question that provides students with a purpose for reading the selection.

What role, if any, does asking purpose-setting questions have in reading instruction using children's literature? Does the teacher who sets the purpose limit students' efferent experiences with the story? Does the teacher who omits setting the purpose limit children's ability to understand the text? Is efferent reading induced when the teacher frames the reading by asking a purpose-setting question? Is esthetic reading possible in spite of the focus set by the teacher? This study was designed to address these issues.

Findings from research investigating the effectiveness of purpose-setting questions have been inconsistent. Some (Markle & Capie, 1976; Wiesendanger & Wollenberg, 1978) have concluded that purpose-setting questions inhibit student responses. Others, like Blanton, Wood, and Moorman (1990), argue that well-developed purpose-setting questions enhance the reader's comprehension, but that poorly constructed purposes can detract from readers' comprehension by misdirecting attention to irrelevant information or to information that has little import to the overall meaning of the text.

Anderson and Biddle (cited in Tierney & Cunningham, 1985) contend that prereading questions, or purpose questions, may restrict readers' understanding of a text if the purpose for reading is general understanding. Others (Dillon, 1982; Weber, 1986) caution that questions asked by teachers may unintentionally imply to students that the content addressed in the questions is more important than other content. Readers may, therefore, ignore important information when they read or listen to a story. On the other hand, when the material is difficult or when the purpose is to gain specific knowledge, as when reading informational texts, then purpose-setting questions can enhance the readers' comprehension (Rothkopf, 1985; Tierney & Cunningham, 1985).

Pearson and Fielding (1991) identify drawing relationships between students' backgrounds and experiences and a story's content as one of four consistently successful strategies for enhancing comprehension. Questioning is one strategy used by teachers to activate knowledge structures, build background, and relate story content to the readers' backgrounds and experiences. The majority of the research in comprehension instruction has used either texts specifically developed for an investigation or texts from basal readers or textbooks. Pearson and Fielding contend that it is important to determine the effectiveness of traditional instructional strategies used during reading instruction with literature.

The present study was designed to explore the use of the traditional strategy of purpose-setting questions for listening to a children's book. It examines the discussions of children that follow the reading of a book with and without a purpose-setting question preceding the reading.

## METHOD

### Subjects

The focus of this investigation was the group responses of 47 classes of kindergarten through fourth grade students. Student teachers enrolled in an undergraduate language arts course were both data collectors and participants in the study. They read a book to the children in the classrooms in which they were placed during the field-based component of the course. Student teachers were placed in 11 kindergartens, 13 first grades, 7 second grades, 9 third grades, and 7 fourth grades involving five schools in three suburban school systems. The principal researchers were instructors in the course.

The book read and discussed was *The Wall* by Eve Bunting (1990). *The Wall* describes the visit of a boy and his father to the Vietnam Memorial in search of the name of the boy's grandfather. The book was selected because it is a well-constructed story with a strong plot.

### Data Collection

The investigation began in the college classroom with one of the researchers reading and discussing *The Wall* in class. Following personal responses to the book, there was a discussion about reading the book to and discussing it with children. Students generated possible questions to be used in leading discussions with children, and five questions were selected. They also selected the purpose-setting question, "How do you feel as you listen to this book?" Students read the book in one of two ways. Prior to reading, one group asked the purpose-setting question and the second group began the reading by saying, "I know you'll enjoy the book." The reading of the book and the discussions were videotaped and later transcribed by the students. The transcripts and videos, along with summaries of the students' reactions to and reflections on the experience, became part of the data.

## RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Before analyzing the students' responses to the questions, we determined what would be considered acceptable answers. Although acceptable answers are always somewhat subjective, we accepted Rosenblatt's (1983) criteria for acceptability. That is, the response must be able to be justified within the boundaries of the text. The criteria we set for acceptable answers and examples of children's responses follow.

### Question 1: Why are the boy and the father there?

This is a question calling for a literal response from the story. Acceptable responses needed to indicate that the boy and father were there to find the name of the boy's grandfather who was killed in the Vietnam war. Considered acceptable was any answer that referred to finding the name or remembering the grandfather. Responses that omitted finding the name or remembering were considered unacceptable.

Three groups of children did not have an acceptable response to this question. One was an unfocused second grade group and two were unfocused third grade groups. However, in the three transcripts, the student teacher leading the discussion appeared to detrimentally affect students' ability to get to the correct answer. The following example is from the second grade.

**Teacher:** Why are the boy and the father there? What about you, Ron?
**Ron:** He put the picture on the wall to know where it is if he comes another time.
**Teacher:** It would be easier to find. (Then the teacher went on to the next question.) Why are the other characters at The Wall?

A contrasting example from another second grade class clarifies the role of the teacher in supporting the children in their discussion.

**Teacher:** Why are the father and the boy at The Wall?
**James:** Because, um, because his grandfather died in a war.
**Teacher:** Can anybody think of anything different?
**Bill:** His grandfather died in a war and they were going to see if they could find his name on The Wall.

The critical difference in the success of these interactions in obtaining an acceptable answer appears to be the leadership of the teacher rather than students' understanding or lack of understanding.

### Question 2: Why are the other characters at The Wall?

This question required children to infer the purposes of other characters' visits, which are not stated in the text. Considered correct were answers that demonstrated that children made this inference.

Only two groups of children, one kindergarten focused and one first grade unfocused, did not adequately respond to this question. Again, the actions of the teacher seemed to limit the responses of the students. When a child responded that the other people were there because they were in the soldier fight, the teacher responded by repeating the child's words, "Because they were in a soldier fight," and then proceeded to ask the next question. In the other instance, the teacher appeared to ignore the answer and then asked the next question.

### Question 3: Why did they leave flowers, pictures, flags at The Wall?

This question also required students to infer possible reasons for objects being left at The Wall. To be correct, an answer needed to involve remembering or relating to the sentimental value of the act as presented in the book. Every class gave appropriate responses to this question.

### Question 4: How did you feel about what happened in this book?

Question 4 called for personal response. Correct responses were those that dealt with feelings for the child in the book and those that related children's own experiences with loss. Every class gave appropriate responses to this question.

### Question 5: What would you say to the boy if he were your friend?

This question also calls for personal response. Acceptable responses included those that called for personal response. Acceptable responses indicated understanding that the child in the story was experiencing the loss of his grandfather. Only one kindergarten class did not have acceptable responses to this question. In this class, the student teacher experienced difficulty in maintaining control of the class. Throughout the transcript, she asked children to sit up, listen, and pay attention. The discussion of this final question never approached the seriousness with which other classes discussed the question.

**Teacher:** OK. What would you say to this boy in the story if he were your friend? Amy, what would you tell him?
**Amy:** If I first met him I would say, "Hi."
**Teacher:** What would you tell him, Celia? What would you say to the boy if he were your friend?
**Celia:** If he was to walk in here, I'd say, "Freeze, Buster!"
**Teacher:** You are being silly. Let's listen to Crissy. What would you say, Crissy?

Other teachers did not experience such difficulty. Students took this question quite seriously and responded by offering sympathy, consolation, friendship, and sometimes material possessions. In all other cases, it was obvious that the students understood the story and could talk about it.

For analysis, the transcripts were sorted into two groups: those that involved the purpose-setting question and those that did not. Each group of transcripts was read by both researchers and a graduate assistant for an initial sense of the discussion event in the groups. The children's responses were then reread from the perspective of our framework of acceptable responses. Since we were studying group response, incorrect or partially correct responses that led the group to an acceptable answer were not considered incorrect. The criteria for correctness was met when anyone in the class responded correctly.

The findings from this study are illustrated in the Table. At all grade levels, most classes were able to meet our criteria for answering the questions in a way that we found acceptable. In all but five of the groups, questions were successfully answered through group discussion. The findings are presented in terms of percentages, yet because the number of classes within each group is small, the percentages are somewhat deceiving. For example, in every case, fewer than 100%—only one or two classes—were not able to answer the target question correctly.

It is clear that each class was able to respond appropriately to the set of planned questions. This was true at all grade levels even though the responses were not all the same. The qualitative analysis of the responses indicated that there were ways in which younger students responded that were different from the responses of older students. But the differences did not alter the fact that all classes demonstrated their understandings of the story and their ability to answer the questions appropriately. Students discussed questions that called for both esthetic and efferent understandings of the book, bringing their own experiences and personal responses to their discussion.

**TABLE**
**Percent of classes by grade level and focus answering correctly**

| | Grade level/Focused or Unfocused | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | K/U | K/F | 1/U | 1/F | 2/U | 2/F | 3/U | 3/F | 4/U | 4/F |
| Number of classes | 7 | 4 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| Question 1 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 80 | 100 | 67 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Question 2 | 86 | 100 | 100 | 75 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Question 3 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Question 4 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Question 5 | 100 | 75 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

When the groups are totaled and overall percentages considered, it is clear that no real differences existed between focused and unfocused groups. Beginning the reading of this story by focusing students' attention on their feelings did not affect their ability to answer questions that required attention to detail. Likewise, the absence of a purpose-setting question did not limit children's responses to discussion questions that directly related to the purpose-setting question. There was no need for the teacher to build the background for the students. They did this quite successfully for themselves.

The results of our study suggest that the use of a purpose-setting question is not necessary for children to adequately understand, respond to, or talk about a book. In addition, the use of purpose-setting questions proved not to be detrimental for children's understanding and discussing a story. It is possible that the children's success in talking about this book is at least partly due to the fact that *The Wall* is a well-written story. From the student teachers' accounts, it held the interest of their students who listened intently to the story, just as they, themselves, had listened when the book was read to them in class. Perhaps, if a text is less compelling or if the reading involves content less interesting, focusing children's attention may be indicated. Further study is indicated in this area.

Also significant is the high percentage of classes that successfully responded to the questions. Lack of understanding was not indicated in any of the classes, regardless of age or grade level.

This study supports the growing body of literature that suggests that children are capable of far more than is often expected. Although children responded in ways that may be age or experience related, they were able to convince us that they were actively involved in understanding and relating to the book.

Also indicated in this study is the significant impact of the teacher. Teachers need to examine, consider, and reconsider their significant roles in every situation in the classroom. For teacher education programs, this suggests specific training in group discussion and continued reflection into one's own practice. For our own preservice teachers in language arts courses, we have included specific class experiences in leading discussion groups and in examining beliefs about initiating and leading discussions.

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# "...So I Write It Out": Seizing the Power of Personal Journal Writing in Affirming African-American Student Identities

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Estimates indicate that by the year 2020, minority children will constitute the majority of the school-age population (Hodgkinson, 1985). Why focus on African-American students? One reason is the so-called demographic imperative (Ozawa, cited in Gibbs & Huang, 1985). Simply stated, the "demographic imperative" refers to the fact that, although not the fastest-growing minority group, African-American students form a significant segment within the trend. Part of the demographic picture is that the teaching force, especially at the elementary school level, will remain largely Caucasian and female (NEA, 1992). Although it may be desirable for many reasons, it is not practical to suppose that African-American students and other minority children will be taught by teachers of the same ethnic heritage. Therefore, part of the demographic imperative, in our view, is that teachers must become cultural translators who are able to effectively bridge many potential types of cross-cultural differences.

Educational theorists report that personal journals offer writers a place to reflect on roles within cultural groups, a place for introspection. Research findings reveal that writing in personal journals develops language processes and organizational abilities, offers opportunities for applying knowledge gained in academic and social settings, and may facilitate positive attitudes toward literacy.

To begin the discussion, consider the words of Rodney, a 13-year-old African-American student in a fourth grade classroom:

> I write about fights and places I went to during the summer and stuff like that. Like the summer I was running track and I won three trophies and a ribbon. I'd been wanting to run track for the longest time. The first day the coach was hollering at me and stuff because I wasn't doing the right things...when I got home my step-mother was hollering because I wasn't doing the right things, and my mama say, `Don't worry,' because it was just my first year. And then I started getting excited because I liked the running. I wrote all this in my journal at home....I wrote about my grandpa because he might die pretty soon because he can't speak that well and get up and stuff like that. He very old, so I like to take care of him. He talks to me about dying soon. It makes me feel bad so I write it out — 1989

Rodney's words imply a powerful message for educators: Journals are a place for young learners to explore their cultural existence and engage in an ongoing conversation that both maps and puts on the map the developing self. Having the place that journals provide for transactional, expressive, and poetic writing (Britton, 1982) is ideal for all young learners, but perhaps urgent for African-American students, especially those who are male and poor.

A second reason that African-American students deserve our attention relates to the seeming intractability of their patterns of underachievement. On all major indicators of academic performance (e.g., grades, standardized test scores, years of education completed, units earned, dropout rates, and enrollment and persistence in post-secondary schooling), African-American students do more poorly than other groups (Reed, 1988). These patterns continue largely unabated.

Moreover, the educational and societal problems of African-American males are at a crisis level, leading to their designation as an "endangered species" (Gibbs, 1988). The outlook for them is the bleakest of any group. Compared to other gender-race groups, African-American male youths' rates of dropping out, suspension, expulsion, unemployment, underemployment, incarceration, and premature death are the highest (Irvine, 1990).

Attempts to explain achievement and related disparities "range from the philosophical to the biological, the statistical to the psychological" (LeGrand, 1981, p. 680). A review of competing accounts is not within the scope of this discussion. However, we reject unidimensional explanations. We believe that the depressed performance of African-American students as a group cannot be explained without examining both macrolevel structural factors (e.g., broad social, economic, and educational conditions), and microlevel interactions (e.g., interpersonal classroom exchanges). Similarly, to be lasting, solutions must have the potential to address both macrolevel and microlevel forces and interactions.

One noteworthy explanation of the comparatively low achievement of African-American students is found in the work of anthropologist John Ogbu (1974, 1990). In an ethnographic study conducted by Ogbu (1974) in Stockton, California, African-American students acknowledged that they did not take school work seriously. Lack of effort more than lack of ability characterized their performance. Ogbu theorized that the students were unconvinced that good grades and staying in school meant that economic and personal success would follow. Unfortunately, employment opportunity statistics for African-Americans support the beliefs of students in Ogbu's study. Norgren and Hill (cited in Ogbu, 1990) found that large numbers of African-Americans with high school and college degrees are not hired in jobs commensurate with their educational levels. The result is that African-American students, members of an "involuntary minority," in an apparent effort to cope with rejection, create an "oppositional culture" (Ogbu, 1990). Students reject the dominant culture, which they believe denies others like themselves equal access, and they may even view successful competition with the majority as selling out. Thus, there is evidence that African-American students' low achievement may be the result of lack of effort structured within an oppositional culture.

However, the greater weight of evidence indicates that African-American students and in particular "black males are probably the most feared, least likely to be identified with, and least likely to be effectively taught" (Hare & Castenell, cited in Irvine, 1990, p. 78) of any other group in school. This evidence suggests that African-American students' low achievement patterns result from alienation arising from interactions they experience within, not beyond, school settings. This alienation is a looming factor in the comparatively poor academic achievement of African-American students.

Research on the correlates and causes of the disparate achievement of African-American students has been summarized by Irvine (1990). This research indicates that the school experiences of African-American students, especially the poor, are qualitatively different from those of other groups along at least three separate but interrelated dimensions: affective, cognitive, and cultural.

In terms of affect, among the main findings are that teachers have lower expectations for African-American students than for Caucasian students and that African-American students have fewer favorable interactions with teachers than do Caucasian children (Irvine, 1990). Irvine believes that this negative climate persists in part because teachers may be "selectively reinforcing their stereotypic thinking by cataloging information that confirms their first impressions and by dismissing or ignoring contradictory data that produce cognitive dissonance" (p. 55). We believe that journal writing has the potential to combat the effects of confirmatory bias because entries provide sustained evidence of students' complex, multifaceted, and richly configured personalities.

However, we caution against the danger of placing a burden of proof on African-American students, whereby they "must demonstrate to teachers that the negative stereotypes generally associated with African-American students' behavior do not pertain to them" (Irvine, 1990, p. 56). This process is counterproductive and can only fuel the development of the "oppositional culture" (Ogbu, 1990).

From the cognitive dimension, African-American, and especially poor, students are more likely than others to receive instruction and practice in lower-order skills. Others, especially those from more advantaged socioeconomic groups, tend to receive greater opportunities to engage in creative and higher-order thinking (Irvine, 1990). Overreliance on workbooks and worksheets and reduced time on academic tasks are hallmarks of instruction for African-American students who are usually disproportionately represented in lower curriculum tracks and classroom groups (Irvine, 1990). Journal writing, which promotes higher-order thinking, would be most appropriate as a means for promoting creative and critical thinking among African-American students.

From a cultural perspective, the school experiences of African-American students, especially the poor, are often not structured to correspond to or capitalize on their cultural backgrounds. Although the poor quality of schooling received by African-American students is sufficient to alienate students of any cultural origin, the cultural asynchronization (Irvine, 1990) that they experience is yet another of several factors militating against high academic achievement.

African-American culture is not a monolithic entity. Care must be taken not to make unqualified generalizations. However, racial differences as social constructs do exist and "cultural aversion" (Irvine, 1990) must be avoided. Cultural aversion, the unwillingness to talk about race and related issues, whether from a desire to be colorblind, lack of knowledge about cultural heritages, or fear that such discussion will disrupt the peace, is ultimately a disservice to students. The often negative effects of racism are all too real for them; they need affirmation of the legitimacy of their cultural identities. As will be seen, journals have the potential to be safe places for students to explore themselves as individuals and as parts of a larger culture or cultures.

Scholars such as Ogbu suggest that systemic change in the broader society to which we all belong will be necessary in order to ameliorate many of the factors contributing to the dominant pattern of academic underachievement found among African-American students. However, the research reviewed by Irvine suggests that African-American students' experience at the classroom level must be restructured. Teachers of literacy need not wait for macrolevel changes to take place before they initiate interactions that are as positive for African-American students as for others. Carefully structured journal writing activities represent microlevel processes compatible with systemic changes that would open channels for the voices of young African-American students, voices too often silenced in the conversation that is our American educational enterprise.

## A MODEL OF THE ROLE OF AFFECT IN READING

In discussing the potential of journal writing, one should consider the pervasiveness of feelings, experiences, and ego in the learning environment. No doubt, African-American students' lack of achievement is tied to the degree to which their studies are relevant to their lives. Henk and Holmes (1988) have revised Mathewson's (1985) model of reading that includes attitude toward content as an important part of the reader's ability to comprehend. The revised model illustrates that the reading outcome includes three factors: reader, text, and task.

The reader's ego-involvement is most influential when he or she has a high degree of involvement with the topic. Certainly, personal journals are an ideal place to begin developing the notion that as individuals, we play an important part in the broader view of life. Perhaps this beginning would foster greater interest in and involvement with texts pertaining to more diverse subjects.

The next component, text, includes consistent or inconsistent attitude versus an impartial attitude. Again, a consistent attitude will typically involve a great amount of ego-involvement, which can enhance comprehension. Unfortunately, many texts used in schools are not applicable to some African-American students' lives. For example, consider stories of rural life presented to inner-city children or urban tales presented to isolated farming students, and descriptions of cultures thousands of miles from students' homes. While such texts are important in developing global literacy, they do not offer all students a point from which to feel they "belong." Journals may offer students a place to begin a personal exploration of their roles in others' lives, including those from other cultures.

The last component, task, consists of several subcomponents: external or internal factors, immediate or delayed responses, high-level or low-level information, judgment of an issue, and recall of an issue. When the focus of the response is internal, attitude is a significant factor. When the response is delayed, the resulting distortion of information in memory is significant. If the information is generalized, then it is more easily distorted. Finally, judgment is significant in cases where the reading task is internally focused. As the model illustrates, comprehension is a complicated process that is easily influenced by a number of internal and external factors. These factors can combine in sometimes unpredictable ways, producing a wide range of responses within a given group. Again, journals serve as a locus for immediate and delayed internal response involving judgments about self, events, and people encountered in living. Personal journal writing is typically related to personal roles within a given group and is a result of group messages about behavior. In Henk and Holmes' terms, the internal focus of the task influences judgment, and the personal journal entry offers a confidential and safe place to explore this judgment.

As we have seen, the negative classroom climate for African-American students is associated with teachers' lower expectations for them, which lessens the likelihood of favorable interactions between teacher and student. Journal writing by African-American students has the potential to produce very necessary and healthy cognitive dissonance for the teachers who may underestimate them. And while we caution against burdening African-American students with having to prove that they are "different from the rest," it is nevertheless true that personal journal entries allow students to disclose and make available to teachers the richness of their observations and aspirations.

## THE ROLE OF JOURNAL WRITING IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

Journals allow the writer to gather and organize thoughts, feelings, and experiences. D'Arcy (1987) states that journals can enable pupils to collect ideas and information, thereby giving writers the opportunity to rediscover what is already known. The act of journal writing generates questions and allows honest expressions of feelings. The internal conversation between the writer and self-audience provides a personal map of progress. In addition, journal writing does not demand a special writing manner. Employing language in conveying culturally bound and shared ideas is a positive use, which may result in stimulating a desire to continue the practice.

The discussion above leads to the conclusion that journal writing is an event during which the writer is actively learning about self: role(s) within culture, expectations and consequences from culture, and how to amend experiences into a useful guide that can be referred to in future dealings with culture. Developmental psychologists (e.g., Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975) believe that journal writing can serve to refine and redefine the cultural system of beliefs that students have in early life, facilitating growth into the more sophisticated systems achieved through education. In addition to the personal knowledge that can be gained, journal writing may provide a vehicle through which students form relationships between one subject and another, from academics to life, from person to person, and from present to future. Fulwiler (1987) advocates writing across the curriculum in order to effect a transfer of power from the teacher to the learner, creating a student-centered curriculum (Barnes & Smithson, 1986). Journal writing provides an ideal opportunity for educators of African-American students to achieve this goal.

Two characteristics of journal writing, selective memory and chronology revision, contribute to the development of "personal myth" (Jensen, 1984). This is accomplished when students draw on the past and future in order to explain the present. In this sense, journals become records of facts (operating successfully within reality by establishing standards, striving to improve life, learning to live with family and peers), and myths (defeating formidable opponents, surpassing one's established standards), which define a life—a person's truth. Through this process, journals demonstrate to the writer that the past does not die but becomes part of an understandable pattern in life (Yerger, 1984).

Journals are typically ungraded and exist as vehicles for voluntary sharing of information and feelings. Larson and Merrion (1987) recommend that those who keep journals write as best they can without regard to surface structure, since the primary goal is to facilitate the flow of thought, downplaying excessive attention to mechanics. Typically, journals are written in first person, which facilitates the recording of one's personal history. Murray (1985) addresses the personal advantages that writing in first person allows: detachment for the mind, ideas, and feelings. Detachment allows the writer to separate self from the written account. Burnham (1987) suggests that journals allow students to use and develop higher-order thinking skills while encouraging both self and psychological growth.

Journals are useful as places for self-exploration and questioning, as well as being windows to these explorations. Handled sensitively by the teacher, journals can be the "yes" places of which Macrorie (1987) has written. For participants of all cultures, journals offer a venue for exploring the tensions and contradictions so often inherent in dual-culture existence. In addition, journals may be a forum for organizing cognitions, identifying feelings, recording knowledge, and documenting personal histories. For these reasons, the personal journal has potential as a tool for facilitating a greater understanding of the transitions that are a part of life.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION

Two primary implications may be taken from the preceding discussion. First, journal writing should be a voluntary activity. Second, students may benefit from increased opportunities to make decisions regarding school and social and independent activities. By increasing decision-making opportunities while providing and encouraging reflection through journal writing, teachers are facilitating students' awareness of self within a culture. This knowledge develops simultaneously with increased reading-writing abilities and, possibly, positive attitudes toward literacy.

Journal writing can be implemented immediately and, if sensitively structured, can mitigate against the inequity in so many classrooms in which African-American students are differentially and more poorly educated. Journals provide a resource for African-American students to clarify their own goals and identities. Journals can also provide a way for students to be revealed to teachers as having complex persona instead of unidimensional identities. Personal journals provide a place to find or explore one's voice and to have it heard.

We cautioned earlier about the need for teachers to be wary of cultural aversion or the tendency to deny cultural differences and their effects. We have focused on African-American students because we believe that, unfortunately, they may well be harbingers of things to come for other groups of students. For as Irvine (1990) has stated, it is not only the African-American (male) student, but the "typical student" who is an endangered species. "Highly motivated, achievement-oriented, white middle class students from two-parent families are becoming scarce in most school systems — rural, suburban, and urban" (p. 126). They will become even more scarce as time passes. In focusing on African-American students, therefore, we wish to dash false comfort and a sense of difference and immunity. Reminding us that "What goes around, comes around," Wideman (1992) observed that

> In the past century, every major social cataclysm, every man-made or natural disaster that's ravaged the black community, gradually, inevitably, sometimes instantly, rocks us all. Problems seemingly race-specific only appear that way because the effective

> legal-political, social, and moral climates of the nation situate black communities in a position of extreme vulnerability. For better or worse, we've always been the point men, the canaries in cages that miners tote deep underground. (p. B2)

As Wideman suggests, enlightened self-interest compels us to address barriers to African-American student academic achievement. The things we learn from African-American children may one day illuminate solutions to others' problems.

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# Affective Concerns and Reading

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The importance of the affective domain on the school experience of children has long been a focus of educational theorists and psychologists (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964; Raths, Harmin, & Simon, 1966; Rogers, 1961). However, according to Irene Athey (1985), affective factors in reading have not been elaborated on or explained.

An examination of major reading research journals such as *Reading Research Quarterly*, the *Journal of Reading Behavior, Reading Research and Instruction*, and *Reading Psychology* clearly reflect the lack of attention paid to affective dimensions by reading researchers. In examining the total number of articles published in these prestigious journals over the past 20 years, about 9% deal with affective concerns. While this percentage may appear reasonable considering the breadth of areas receiving the scrutiny of reading researchers, it seems low in comparison to the emphasis educators place upon developing life-long readers. The assumption is made here that "a nation of readers" refers to individuals who actually do read rather than only those capable of reading.

The lack of attention to affective concerns is worse when material for practitioners is examined. In the past 30 volumes of *The Reading Teacher*, fewer than 1% of the total number of articles have dealt with affective dimensions of reading and reading instruction. Furthermore, the International Reading Association's book publication list has only five titles in this area, none of which were published in the past eight years.

Recent "benchmark" publications fare no better. The Report of the

Commission on Reading's *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkenson, 1985), the *Handbook of Reading Research, Volume II* (Barr, Kamil, Mosenthal, & Pearson, 1991), and *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning About Print* (Adams, 1990) also reflect the scant attention paid to affect. Adam's book and the Report of the Commission barely mention any facet of the affective domain taxonomy (Kratwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964). Indeed, even when the Commission on Reading presented its five principles of reading, only one facet, motivation, was mentioned. And motivation is not even a primary component of the affective domain (see the table). Rather, it is seen as an influence on other affective components at the first level of the taxonomy, receptiveness. The Commission did not make a single recommendation regarding important affective dimensions of reading. Perhaps more disturbing when it comes to research in reading, the *Handbook* did not mention attitudes toward reading at all, despite the fact that, of all the affective dimensions, it is the one with the largest research base.

The apparent lack of interest and research into affective dimensions of reading is surprising because of the attention paid to affect in the literature of social psychology. This body of literature contains many examples of the role of affective factors (e.g., self-concept, locus of control, attitudes) on the acquisition of various skills and on achievement (Bakan, 1971; Khan, 1969). As might be expected from this literature corpus, some links between affect and reading have also been found (Blaha, 1982; Chapman, Silva, & Williams, 1984; Filler, Busby, & Smittle, 1971–1972; Hiebert, Winograd, & Danner, 1984; Palardy, 1969; Shapiro, 1980, 1985, 1990; Shapiro & White, 1991). Much of this research has examined attitudes toward reading, their development, and their role in reading achievement. While the research in this latter area is inconsistent, many studies have found moderate relationships at various grade levels between achievement and attitudes (Askov & Fischbach, 1973; Bernstein, 1955; Groff, 1962; Neale, Gill, & Tismer, 1970; Ransbury, 1973; Rowell, 1972; Schnayer, 1969).

The purpose of this paper is not to review the existing research on affective dimensions of reading but to explore the impact of the taxonomy of the affective domain (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964) on research efforts and reasons why this area of research has been so sadly neglected by reading researchers.

## ATTITUDES AND THE AFFECTIVE DOMAIN

In 1964 a taxonomy of the affective domain was developed in order to focus on the terminology of this area and the difficulties inherent in the uses of such terminology (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964). The developers of the taxonomy also hoped that it would foster educational research into affective dimensions of instruction. While the publication of the taxonomy did focus the attention of educators on the affective domain, it did little to stimulate reading researchers to systematically investigate the role of this domain in reading acquisition or later reading behavior.

**TABLE**
**Affective Reading Terms Measured Against the Affective Domain Taxonomy Continuum**

| | Taxonomy | Common Reading Affective Terms |
|---|---|---|
| 1.0 Receiving | 1.1 Awareness<br>1.2 Willingness to Receive<br>1.3 Controlled or Selected Attention | Interest |
| 3.0 Responding | 2.1 Acquiescence in Responding<br>2.2 Willingness to Respond<br>2.3 Satisfaction in Response | Appreciation<br>Attitude |
| 3.0 Valuing | 3.1 Acceptance of a Value<br>3.2 Preference for a Value<br>3.3 Commitment | |
| 4.0 Organization | 4.1 Conceptualization of a Value<br>4.2 Organization of a Value System | |
| 5.0 Characterization by a Value Complex | 5.1 Generalized Set<br>5.2 Characterization | |

Source: Kratwohl, Bloom, & Masia (1964).

The structure of the taxonomy of the affective domain is quite similar to its older counterpart, the taxonomy of the cognitive domain. As the table indicates, the most commonly used affective terms are viewed as discrete items on the taxonomy continuum. The decision to view affect in terms of discrete components, especially as they relate to attitudes and interests, appears to have had an unfortunate long-term impact on the sparse research into the relationships of this domain and reading as well as on reading instruction.

Most reading research into the affective domain has focused on attitudes and the development of measures of attitudes. Little attention has been placed on either appreciation of literature or reading interests. Inquiry into the latter area usually consists of simple compilations of themes and stories that boys and girls of various age levels enjoy. The most plausible reason for this lack of balance in research focus seems to be the separation of these areas on the taxonomy itself.

It is instructive to review the term *attitude*. According to Allport (1967), "an attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related" (p. 5). The key words in this definition might well be "exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response...." The response, in terms of reading behavior, would most likely be the child's demonstrated interest in reading. While attitudes cannot be directly observed, they can be inferred from overt behavior (Good, 1973).

When viewed in this manner, reading attitudes and interests may be closely aligned, certainly more so than represented on the taxonomy. In fact, the taxonomy implies that interests precede attitudes. If one accepts Allport's definition, it would appear to be more accurate to view attitudes and interests as parts of a single construct. That is, an initial interest might spark favorable attitudes, but it is the overt behavior (interest) that must be observed in order to infer that a positive attitude has been internalized. In other words, the reading interests of the child are the energized or action component of the child's attitude toward reading. These interests, or lack thereof, would be the final determinant of the child's attitude. A conceptualization such as this holds implications for the manner in which researchers conduct studies of children's attitudes toward reading. Presently, this area of research is dominated by paper and pencil measures of attitudes or interviews about attitudes. Neither of these techniques provides access to the energized component of the definition.

Another aspect of Allport's definition, which, until very recently has been ignored, is his focus on the organization of attitudes by one's experiences and that these feelings are then generalized to other similar situations. Thus, one would expect that negative experiences with reading instruction might create a negative mind set to other reading behaviors, while positive experiences would support positive views of reading. This line of research has only recently been explored (Shapiro, 1990; Shapiro & White, 1991).

## WHY THE SCARCITY OF RESEARCH INTO AFFECTIVE DIMENSIONS OF READING?

There seem to be three basic reasons for the apparent neglect of affective dimensions in reading research. First, there may be a general lack of interest in this area (Athey, 1985). This is probably the result of an overemphasis upon the mechanics of reading. Most of our teaching and our research has been governed by commonly held conceptions about the nature and processes of reading. For the most part, the focus of our various definitions of reading has been on its cognitive elements. Much of this emphasis can be traced to the scientific management concerns of reading educators in the 1920s and 1930s exemplified by the work of William S. Gray (Shannon, 1990). If mentioned at all, affective elements have been consistently relegated to a secondary position. Thus, the emphasis in instruction and research has been on techniques and elements that may produce the greatest gains in reading achievement scores rather than on actual reading behavior. The emphasis on these techniques and elements can still be seen in recent publications.

Related to this overemphasis are the influences of sociopolitical factors (Shapiro, 1981). While there have been sporadic concerns raised about the influences of instructional reading material upon children's attitudes, interests, and motivation to read, primarily between the 1880s and 1920s, until very recently the issue has rarely been discussed in the modern era of reading instruction. With the advent of the Cold War and especially since the launching of Sputnik, Americans seemed almost obsessed with how American children measured up in terms of reading achievement when compared with children from countries of different political persuasions. These concerns led to arguments about and pursuits of the "best" method to teach reading (e.g., the work of Rudolph Flesch in the 1950s and the First Grade studies of the mid-1960s). Unfortunately, "best" was defined as the highest reading achievement test scores. The development of favorable attitudes toward reading was only a minor part of the First Grade studies, and areas like conception of oneself as a reader or long-term reading habits were certainly not included. The results of this "politicizing" of reading instruction and research are still seen today with district and state reading test score comparisons and the dearth of research on affect.

The third reason for the neglect of the affective dimensions has been the lack of a sound theoretical perspective. Compounding the problem has been the research community's inability to measure the contributions of various components of affect to the reading process and the difficulties with measurement of the various affective dimensions (Squires, 1969). As mentioned earlier, paper and pencil measures predominate in research designs. These measures may lack ecological validity. Their content validity is suspect if they focus on narrow interpretations of the aspect of affect they are designed to tap, such as interpreting attitudes toward reading from responses to the statement "I like to read." The research community itself has had problems accepting instruments in this area because their reliabilities are usually less than those commonly associated with measures of cognitive reading attributes. Concern for reliability arose from early studies, which found little or no support for affective dimensions of reading or produced contrary findings.

## ADDRESSING THIS GAP IN OUR RESEARCH

While new reading practices appear to pay more than just "lip service" to affective concerns, research still lags behind. Part of the movement toward implementing new practices has been spurred by research that indicates that children's conceptions or perceptions of reading are related to forms of instruction (Johns, 1984; Rasinski & DeFord, 1988). The instructional practices that we utilize need to be examined for their affective impact. If it is true that children's conceptions of and attitudes toward reading are influenced by reading materials and methodology, then there is a definite need to examine the complete impact of all facets of instructional delivery systems.

We need to know more about the relationship between formats of instruction, including materials and how they are used, and the development of children's attitudes and perceptions. The influence of teacher and parent modeling on the development of these attributes also requires examination. To what extent are attitudes developed in the home influenced by the school reading program? While early research indicated that there is a significant relationship between home literacy environments and attitude toward reading (Hansen 1969; 1972), more broad-based work needs to be done. What is the relationship between reading instruction and children's self-concept as readers and learners and with children's developing sense of competence? Several years ago, Athey (1985) suggested that Erikson's work on psychosocial stages of development and their relationship to reading would be a fruitful avenue of research. Sadly, little has been done. What are the intrinsic rewards that avid readers find in the act of reading? Why do some children choose to read but others do not?

The above questions represent only a small spectrum of affective issues that could be the focus of reading research. However, future research must take into account measurement concerns. More ecologically valid measures that are in keeping with definitions of the affective areas they purport to measure must be developed. If these measures require reduced sample sizes due to their "labor intensity," it will likely be a useful trade-off. Research efforts must also move beyond the simplistic ideas of affect, which are limited only to attitudes or interests or the equating of one with the other. Finally, research designs need to include random selection of schools, students, and teachers wherever possible. Barring this step, it will be necessary to replicate studies and extend existing research to other populations. While this is not a bold or innovative idea, it will require a new attitude on the part of journal editors, editorial review boards, and conference reviewers regarding the role of replication in contributing to our collective knowledge.

If we are truly interested in life-long reading or at least in facilitating an interest in reading as a leisure activity for school-aged children, then it is clear that more research will have to focus on affective dimensions of reading. The "best" approach to reading instruction may ultimately be that which includes the facilitation of positive attitudes toward reading and independent reading as well as proficient reading ability.

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# Are Content Area Reading Practices Keeping Pace with Research?

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In the past quarter of a century, educators have made great advances in their knowledge of how we comprehend and learn from reading. Historically, readers were seen as passive recipients of information in text. Meaning was thought to reside in the text itself. The comprehension instruction that resulted from this view included teaching students sets of hierarchically ordered subskills. Once the skills were mastered, readers were considered experts, capable of reproducing the meaning of any text in any context. Historically, students were grouped for instruction by ability, a practice that often resulted in lower-achieving students receiving less and inferior instruction.

Contemporary cognitively based views of reading emphasize the interactive nature of reading, the constructive nature of comprehension, and the influence of the instructional context and social interaction on understanding and learning from text (Rosenblatt, 1989; Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977; Spiro, 1980; Vygotsky, 1978). Readers use their existing knowledge and cues from the text and the situational context in which reading occurs to construct a model of meaning from the text (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991). Expert readers use a variety of flexible and adaptable strategies before, during, and after reading to aid in comprehension and recall of materials read. Paris, Wasik, & Turner (1991) assert that "strategic reading is... woven into the fabric of children's cognitive development and necessary for success in school" (p. 360). A major component of content area instruction includes textbooks (Schallert & Roser, 1989) with other printed materials enriching the instruction. Therefore, helping students become strategic readers can improve their learning in all areas of the curriculum.

When teachers use textbooks, tradebooks, and other printed materials as vehicles for teaching content area classes, they should help students develop and apply appropriate before, during, and after reading strategies through modeling and explicit instruction. They should then slowly release responsibility for choosing and using strategies to students by such means as decreasing scaffolding and providing cooperative learning activities (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Doing so will help students use printed material from the day's reading assignment effectively for learning. It will also help them internalize important strategies that they can utilize independently at appropriate times in the future.

## RECOMMENDED PRACTICES AND ACTIVITIES

Prereading instruction prepares students for the rest of the lesson and is crucial to helping them understand and learn from text. At this stage, learners should be engaged in using strategies that help activate prior knowledge related to the topic and develop purposes for reading. What students know about a topic before they read affects comprehension. If that knowledge is to be useful, it must be activated (Bransford & Johnson, 1972). Having a purpose for reading guides students to learn from text by helping them focus their attention on relevant information (Mayer, 1984). The appropriate time to teach or review comprehension strategies that students could apply to construct meaning and increase recall is prior to reading. This is also the time to teach or review vocabulary strategies that students could use to help determine the meanings of important new concepts presented in a text.

During reading, students should use strategies that help them select information relevant to their purposes, organize information by constructing logical and causal connections among ideas presented, monitor their understanding, and respond personally to make text information more meaningful and memorable. Students should read assignments silently because this allows them to focus on meaning rather than performance (Hoffman, 1981), improves comprehension (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985), and provides all students the opportunity to apply the strategies they are learning.

After reading, students should use strategies that help them evaluate their learning in terms of the purposes set for reading, organize the information learned, evaluate and reflect upon what they have learned, integrate learned information with what is already known, and apply learned information to new situations.

The context in which the instruction occurs should also be considered in comprehension instruction (Anthony, Pearson, & Raphael, 1989; Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991). Multidimensional or interactive classrooms produce more student participation and higher achievement than unidimensional classrooms do (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991). Such classrooms feature a variety of instructional grouping patterns, the use of varied instructional methods and materials, and opportunities for students to interact and collaborate with each other.

Various writing activities, including journals and/or reading logs, should also be a feature of contemporary comprehension instruction and content area lessons. These activities enhance thinking, understanding, and learning (McGinley & Tierney, 1988).

## PURPOSE

Recent surveys of instructional activities and practices have revealed that teachers are incorporating some effective activities and practices into their reading class instruction (O'Flahavan & McDonell, 1990; Olson & Gillis, 1991). Students need instruction to help them develop strategies for understanding and learning from increasingly difficult expository materials. The best way to provide this instruction is to integrate it into content area classes as the strategies are needed (Readence, Bean, & Baldwin, 1992). Thus, the purpose of the present study was to determine the extent to which teachers use content area instructional practices and activities that are consistent with current views of reading and learning from text.

## METHOD

A questionnaire designed to elicit information about reading instructional practices and activities and content area instructional practices and activities was developed, based on one used by O'Flahavan and McDonell (1990). In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to circle one of five choices to indicate the percentage of instructional time they used various types of student groupings and instructional materials. We piloted the questionnaire with a small group of teachers and revised items that were found to be confusing. The content reading section of the questionnaire is presented in the Appendix.

One hundred and seven teacher volunteers from three states responded to the questionnaire. Seventy of the 99 teachers who provided useful responses completed the content reading section. Sixty-one were elementary classroom teachers; 9 were secondary content area teachers. Forty-eight had bachelor's degrees; 22 held master's degrees. Slightly more than half of the respondents taught in suburban schools, about a quarter in rural schools, and the rest in urban and inner city schools.

The questionnaires were completed at the close of the first class session in introductory graduate classes in reading or elementary education or at the close of inservice sessions. To encourage honest responses and maintain anonymity, completed questionnaires were collected by a student or an inservice participant or were returned through the mail.

## RESULTS

The table presents the proportion of respondents completing the content

**TABLE**
**Proportion of Teachers Reporting Percentage of Time They Use Practices and Activities in Content Area Instruction**

| | Frequency of Use | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Practices and Activities | Never | 1–25% | 26–50% | 52–75% | 76–100% |
| Instructional context | | | | | |
| Ability groups | 34.8 | 39.4 | 6.1 | 10.6 | 9.1 |
| Cooperative groups | 2.9 | 33.8 | 30.9 | 26.5 | 5.9 |
| Whole class | 4.4 | 10.3 | 22.1 | 29.4 | 33.8 |
| Textbooks | 4.6 | 15.1 | 21.2 | 45.5 | 13.6 |
| Newspapers/Magazines | 16.2 | 57.4 | 19.1 | 7.4 | 0.0 |
| Lecture | 9.1 | 42.4 | 31.8 | 13.6 | 3.0 |
| Language experience | 16.1 | 39.7 | 20.6 | 19.1 | 4.4 |
| Literature/Tradebooks | 14.9 | 40.3 | 28.4 | 11.9 | 4.5 |
| Supplemental materials | 9.2 | 58.5 | 9.2 | 18.5 | 4.6 |
| Hand-on materials | 1.5 | 30.9 | 27.9 | 25.0 | 14.7 |
| Prereading | | | | | |
| Activate prior knowledge | 0.0 | 28.4 | 13.4 | 14.9 | 43.3 |
| Set purpose | 0.0 | 28.4 | 13.4 | 13.4 | 44.8 |
| Predict/Preview | 1.5 | 37.9 | 15.2 | 21.2 | 24.2 |
| Introduce/Review comprehension strategies | 3.1 | 29.2 | 20.0 | 23.1 | 24.6 |
| Writing activities | 3.0 | 27.3 | 22.7 | 27.3 | 19.7 |
| Introduce/Review vocabulary strategies | 1.5 | 28.8 | 15.2 | 27.3 | 27.3 |
| During reading | | | | | |
| Students read silently | 9.2 | 35.4 | 30.8 | 18.5 | 6.2 |
| Students read orally | 4.5 | 23.9 | 31.3 | 23.9 | 16.4 |
| Journals/Reading logs | 38.8 | 23.9 | 17.9 | 13.4 | 6.0 |
| Teacher models reading | 10.6 | 37.9 | 25.8 | 16.7 | 9.1 |
| Postreading | | | | | |
| Computer support | 34.9 | 36.4 | 18.2 | 7.6 | 3.0 |
| Workbooks/Skills sheets | 7.6 | 45.5 | 33.3 | 9.1 | 4.6 |
| Journals/Reading logs | 32.8 | 28.4 | 22.4 | 13.4 | 3.0 |
| Summarizing/Retelling | 3.0 | 25.4 | 17.9 | 37.3 | 16.4 |
| Discussion | 0.0 | 12.1 | 19.7 | 22.7 | 45.5 |
| Writing activities | 6.0 | 25.4 | 20.9 | 29.9 | 17.9 |

area section of the questionnaire who reported using each practice or activity within each percentage range.

### Instructional Milieu

Whole class instruction and textbooks dominated these teachers' classrooms. Sixty-three percent of the respondents reported using whole class instruction, and 59% reported using textbooks 51% to 100% of the time. Students in these classrooms were more likely to work in cooperative groups than ability groups. Sixty-three percent of the respondents reported using cooperative groups 26% to 100% of the time. Thirty-five percent reported never using ability groups, and 74% reported using them 0% to 25% of the time. These teachers rarely supplemented the textbooks by using newspapers, magazines, tradebooks, other supplemental materials, lecture, or language experience (51% to 74% reported use of these materials or activities from 0% to 25% of the time). They were more likely to supplement textbooks by using hands-on materials (53% reported using this type of material 26% to 75% of the time).

### Before Reading

Before having students read, all teachers in the sample engaged their students in activities to activate prior knowledge and set purposes for reading at least some of the time. These teachers were less likely to help students preview a reading assignment, make predictions about what they might learn, or engage in writing prior to reading. Over 50% reported using these activities from 0% to 50% of the time. They were more likely to introduce or review vocabulary strategies than comprehension strategies before their students read.

### During Reading

Students in these teachers' classrooms were more likely to read their assignments orally than silently. Seventy-two percent assigned oral reading 26% to 100% of the time, but only 56% assigned silent reading within the same range. Five percent never used oral reading, and 9% never used silent reading. These teachers rarely asked their students to respond in journals or reading logs while they were reading.

### After Reading

Discussion, summarizing, and retelling were the most frequently used postreading activities. Of the respondents, 54% to 68% reported using these activities from 51% to 100% of the time. All respondents reported using discussion at least some of the time. Computer activities, journals or reading logs, workbooks, and skills sheets were the least frequently used postreading activities. From 53% to 71% of the respondents reported using such activities 0% to 25% of the time.

## DISCUSSION

The respondents in this study were not randomly selected, and their responses may not be representative of teachers in general. The literature reveals some problems with self-report of the use of content reading strategies (Alvermann & Swafford, 1989). Nonetheless, we believe that the results of this study provide a glimpse at how closely the content reading instructional practices of professionally active teachers (i.e., teachers who are beginning graduate programs or participating in inservice sessions) conform to instructional practices suggested by contemporary reading theory and research. Sixty-one of the 70 respondents were elementary level teachers. Therefore, this discussion is aimed at the elementary level.

Are content area reading practices keeping pace with research? Based on the data reported above, the answer is both yes and no. The teachers in this study are providing their students with classroom environments that are multidimensional in many aspects. They use a variety of instructional grouping patterns. Their students have ample opportunities to interact and collaborate with each other. All students have access to the same instruction rather than low achievers receiving less and lower-level instruction. However, their students are not usually afforded the chance to enrich their learning by choosing and reading from a variety of material on topics under study or reading-related tradebooks. This means that poorer readers do not often have the chance to choose and read materials written at their level. It also means that the gifted readers of these teachers do not often have the chance to choose and read materials that will challenge them.

These teachers do not often use journals, reading logs, or other writing activities before, during, or after reading, despite the power such activities have to enhance comprehension and learning. When they do use writing activities, they are most likely to do so during the postreading phase of the lesson.

This glimpse of elementary teachers' content reading instruction reveals that teachers are incorporating some activities and practices suggested by contemporary theory and research. Some of the activities and practices they use—activating prior knowledge, setting a purpose for reading, developing vocabulary, discussing, summarizing, and retelling—suggest that they take responsibility during content instruction for helping students learn information from the textbook. Some of the practices and strategies they are not using—previewing, predicting, and teaching comprehension strategies—are those that would help students learn not only during instruction but also when reading independently.

The results of this study provide only a glimpse, an incomplete look, at the content reading instructional practices of the respondents. Future research in which respondents are interviewed and/or observed would provide greater depth and answer questions such as this: Why do teachers use some activities and practices that contemporary theory and research suggest are effective but not others?

The teachers in this study are professionally active. They are taking graduate classes and/or attending inservice sessions. One might expect them to be incorporating more activities and practices based on contemporary theory and research into their content area instruction. Unfortunately, some research (Joyce & Showers, 1980) suggests that only 5% of the ideas from typical graduate classes and inservice sessions on a topic are ever implemented in the classroom. Higher rates of implementation occur when teachers see the new practices demonstrated in their classrooms, have the opportunity to try the practices themselves, receive feedback from a supportive colleague or mentor, and have time and continued support to experiment with and assimilate practices that work for them and their students into their classroom repertoires (Gersten, Woodward, & Morvant, 1992; Johnston & Wilder, 1992; Joyce & Showers, 1980).

Perhaps college professors and district staff developers need to rethink the ways they work with practicing teachers. Contemporary theory and research on reading and learning suggests that children learn best when they are active participants, have choices, are taught skills and strategies as needed, are supported in their efforts through scaffolding, work collaboratively with peers, and so on. If the transmission model of instruction is not appropriate for children, is is appropriate for their teachers?

## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire on Practices Related to Contemporary Reading Instruction

We are surveying teachers in several states to get a "picture" of contemporary reading instruction. We would appreciate your completing this questionnaire. It should only take five or ten minutes of your time.

Thank you for your help.

**Directions:**

Those who teach only reading should complete Parts I and II.

Those who teach only another subject should complete Parts I and III.

Those who teach both reading and another subject should complete Parts I, II, and III.

Circle your answers and complete the few blanks.

**PART I Everyone please complete.**

1. At what level do you teach?
   Primary Intermediate Junior High High School
2. What is your highest degree? ____________________
3. How many years have you been teaching?
   1-3 4-6 7-10 11-15 16-20 21 +
4. What is your teaching assignment (e.g., classroom teacher, history teacher, reading specialist, special educator)? ____________________
5. Where is your school located?
   Inner City Urban Area Suburban Area Rural Area
6. In what state is your school located? ____________________
7. What is percentage of minority students in your school?
   0% 10% 25% 33% 50% 66% 75% 100%

**Part III Please complete only if you are responsible for teaching a content subject.**

9. During one month, what percentage of content area instructional time do you do the following?

Instructional Milieu

a. Ability groups 0% 1-25% 26-50% 51-75% 76-100%

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| b. Cooperative groups | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| c. Whole class | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| d. Textbooks | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| e. Newspapers, magazines | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| f. Lecture | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| g. Language experience | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| h. Literature/tradebooks | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| i. Published supplemental materials | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| j. "Hands on" materials | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| Prereading | | | | | |
| k. Activate students' prior knowledge | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| l. Set purpose for reading | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| m. Generate predictions or preview | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| n. Introduce/review comprehension strategies | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| o. Writing activities | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| p. Introduce/review vocabulary strategies | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| During Reading | | | | | |
| q. Students read silently | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| r. Students read orally | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| s. Journals and/or literature logs | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| t. Model by reading yourself | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| Postreading | | | | | |
| u. Computer support | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| v. Workbooks, dittos, skills sheets | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| w. Journals and/or literature logs | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| x. Summarizing or retellings | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| y. Discussion | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |
| z. Writing activities | 0% | 1-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-100% |

Comments

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# Relationships Among Field Dependence-Independence, Reading Instruction, and Reading Achievement

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> A decade of research indicates that students do have identifiable reading styles that predispose them to learn with ease and enjoyment through particular reading strategies, methods and materials.
>
> Carbo (1988, p.323)

One learner "style" variable that has enjoyed wide-spread and rigorous research for more than 40 years is given the generalized title of cognitive style. Within this rubric is a more specific construct called field dependence-field independence (FDI), which attempts to explain the ways in which individuals perceive and interpret stimuli. Two widely differing orientations toward reading instruction that may be related to FDI are whole language and reading skills. The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationships among FDI, whole language and reading skills instructional orientations, and reading achievement. Results from the study may help determine whether it would be advantageous to place learners in a whole language or skills environment based on FDI.

According to Witkin and Goodenough (1981), early FDI studies of Asch and Witkin dealt with perception reference strategies individuals use to locate the upright. These studies found that there was great variability in performance among subjects but that individuals demonstrated self-consistency across three measures:

1. The *rod and frame test:* subject adjusts a rod to a vertical position within a tilted frame.

2. The *body adjustment test:* subject adjusts a chair to the upright within a tilted surrounding room.
3. The *rotating room test:* subject adjusts a chair to a vertical position within a rotating room.

Some subjects relied on the external field (frame or room), while others relied on body position to locate the upright. The former are termed field dependent; the latter field independent.

Subsequent research required subjects to outline a simple figure embedded within a more complex figure, tasks required in the *Embedded Figures Test* (EFT) (Witkin, 1971) and the *Group Embedded Figures Test* (GEFT) (Oltman, Raskin, & Witkin, 1971). Witkin and Goodenough (1981) noted that subjects who had difficulty separating the hidden figure from background could also be identified as field dependent.

For individuals whose mode of perceiving is field dependent, the entire field is viewed as fused. They have a global style of perception. For individuals whose mode of perceiving is field independent, parts of the field are experienced as discrete from an organized ground. They have an analytical style of perception (Witkin, Oltman, Raskin, & Karp, 1971). Performance on the EFT and GEFT is clearly related to an individual's ability to disembed a simple figure from an organized field. Field independent individuals demonstrate increased ability to disembed a hidden figure from an organized field, and field dependent individuals demonstrate decreased ability on these tasks.

Witkin, Oltman, Raskin, & Karp (1971) note that FDI can be generalized to successful completion of other tasks that require learners to disembed an element from its context:

> The stylistic tendencies we have been discussing are not limited to a person's perception of an immediately present stimulus configuration: they show themselves, in congruent form, in his intellectual activities, i.e., his dealings with symbolic representations. Thus, persons who have difficulty disembedding simple figures from complex designs on the EFT tend to do less well in solving that class of problems which require isolating an essential element from the context in which it is presented.

Thus, FDI might covary significantly with reading instruction and achievement testing tasks that require disembedding, such as dividing words into syllables, locating parts of speech within a sentence, dividing words into prefixes, roots, and suffixes, and identifying phonic elements.

The number of studies that have examined FDI related to reading achievement is limited, and findings are inconsistent. After a review of the literature up to and including 1982, Rasinski (1983, p. 6) concluded that "good readers tend to score higher on measures of field independence than poor readers." The findings of Stuart (1967) and Wineman (1971) support Rasinski's findings in that field independent fourth through eighth graders tended to score better on standardized reading measures than field dependent learners drawn from the same population. However, using a sample from a similar population (sixth, seventh, and eighth grade readers), Roberge and Flexer (1984) reported that FDI had no significant effect on reading achievement as measured by the Total Reading Test of the *Metropolitan Achievement Test* (MAT) (Durost, Bixler, Wrightstone, Prescott, & Balow, 1970).

On the other hand, Drane, Halpin, Halpin, vonEschenbach, and Worden (1989) noted that second grade field independent readers were more proficient in the Reading Comprehension, Sight Vocabulary, Vocabulary in Context, and Word-Part Clues subtests of the *MAT: Reading Instruction Tests Primary 1 and Primary 2* (Farr, Prescott, Balow, & Hogan, 1978). It must be noted that discerning vocabulary in context and deriving meaning from word-part clues are tasks that require readers to isolate words or word parts from context. Such tasks are more associated with field independent learning.

Finally, in establishing the relationship of FDI to verbal ability as expressed through vocabulary test scores among adults, Witkin and Goodenough (1981) were able to locate 11 studies with a composite sample of 811. The mean correlation between verbal ability and EFT performance was significant but small ($r = .14$); in the same 11 studies, the mean correlation between verbal ability as expressed through vocabulary test scores and the rod and frame test was nonsignificant ($r = .04$). In addition, other studies have questioned the relationship of FDI to reading achievement (e.g., Buriel, 1978; Petersen & Magaro, 1969).

From the studies cited above, it is not possible to state conclusively the extent to which FDI may be related to total reading achievement and/or comprehension. However, one pattern appears to emerge. When reading achievement tests—and, for that matter, reading instruction—emphasize tasks requiring readers to disembed words or word parts from context, there is apparent covariation with FDI (Drane et al., 1989). It might be predicted, then, that field independent learners, because of their analytical style of perception, will show greater reading achievement gains on such aforementioned measures than will their field dependent counterparts. Similarly, it might be predicted that if reading instruction and reading achievement measures do not emphasize tasks requiring readers to disembed words or word parts from context, the difference in reading achievement between field independent and field dependent learners should be negligible.

A factor related to reading instruction and achievement—and possibly to FDI—is teachers' theoretical orientation toward reading instruction. Teachers who maintain a skills orientation tend to employ learning tasks that require isolating items from their context (e.g., dividing words into syllables, locating parts of speech within a sentence, dividing words into prefixes, roots, and suffixes, and identifying phonic elements). On the other hand, teachers whose orientation is more holistic tend to de-emphasize such learning tasks.

Whole language advocates object to having students evaluated with standardized tests. There is a strong belief that these tests do not measure the type of learning taking place in whole language classrooms. Consequently, there are few studies that have attempted to compare whole language and more traditional classrooms by using standardized pre- and posttests for reading and/or language development. An examination of the literature reveals only six such studies.

A second and more serious problem is in the definition of whole language used in these six studies. It is not always possible to determine whether the classrooms studied were, in fact, whole language. Stahl and Miller (1989) conducted a rather extensive meta-analysis in which they compared basal reading programs with what they called whole language/language experience. They concluded:

> The results of the meta-analysis and vote-counting procedures appear to suggest that, overall, whole language/language experience approaches were approximately equal to basal reading approaches in their effects. This was found on both standardized and nonstandardized measures.... These results, however, were not consistent across all studies. Whole language/language experience approaches appear to be more effective when used in kindergarten or when used instead of a reading readiness program and seem to have had greater effects on measures of word recognition than on measures of comprehension. (p. 107)

One can only wonder how valid the comparison is when the programs defined as whole language are confused with those better classified as language experience.

Holland and Hall (1989), in a small study of two first grade classrooms, compared basal reading programs with whole language. They concluded that

> there is no significant difference in the total reading achievement of first grade students taught under a whole language and those taught under a basal approach as measured by the first grade Georgia Criterion Referenced Test. (p. 328)

However, the whole language classroom, according to Holland and Hall, was actually a classroom in which the *Success in Reading and Writing* instructional program was used. The authors list eight characteristics of the program and, though many of the eight seem in agreement with the basic assumptions of whole language, it is quite possible to achieve these characteristics without manifesting a whole language classroom.

Medearis (1985) investigated the use of centers and curriculum themes on the written language production of kindergarten children. She concluded that centers and themes motivated children to write more and to use a greater assortment of language functions. Again, neither centers nor themes are sufficient conditions for whole language programs.

Reutzel and Cooter (1990) compared four first grade classrooms (two each) using basal readers or a whole language approach. Their definition of whole language is somewhat better than those mentioned above. The "holistic" first grades were characterized by being "rich in print-oriented activities" and teachers who "followed a daily reading routine, as outlined and described by Holdaway." They further described the whole language classrooms as those in which

> the teachers used Big Books or the Shared Book Experience to provide guided reading instruction.... Also, read-along books and tapes, music, and art activities accompanied the Big-Book units. Various facets and uses of the language experience approach..., word banks, and pattern sentence stories were used to enrich the print practices.... Children were encouraged to write and to use invented spellings on a regular basis. (p. 254)

As a result of their study, Reutzel and Cooter conclude:

> We found significant differences favoring the whole language classes over the basal classes on total reading scores as well as on the vocabulary and comprehension subtest scores at the conclusion of the first grade... whole language appears to be moderately more effective than basal programs in affecting first grade children's reading achievement. (p. 256)

Manning and her associates (Manning, 1989) conducted a longitudinal study in which children in whole language classrooms were compared with children in skills-oriented programs, beginning with kindergarten and ending with the conclusion of second grade. They concluded that children in whole language classrooms showed significant gains in reading achievement. However, generalizability of the study is limited. The study began with 50 children; by the end of second grade, attrition had reduced the group to 11.

Probably the most extensive study comparing skills and whole language was conducted by Stice and Bertrand (1990). This two-year study compared the achievement of nearly 100 at-risk first and second grade children in whole language and traditional classrooms. Findings showed that children in whole language classrooms performed as well as children from traditional classrooms on standardized achievement tests in reading. They report the following:

> In addition, children from the whole language classrooms: (1) read for meaning better, corrected more of their mistakes, and retold more fully the stories they read; (2) wrote so much that they did as well or better than their traditional counterparts on spelling, with little or no direct instruction in spelling; (3) appeared more confident in their reading; and (4) appeared to possess a wider variety of strategies related to reading. (p. 6)

The literature reviewed above suggests that (1) results of studies regarding the relationship(s) of FDI with reading achievement are unclear; (2) there is evidence to suggest that standardized reading achievement measures are appropriate for comparing students' final reading achievement scores in skills and whole language classrooms; and (3) children taught in whole language classrooms read as well as or better than their counterparts in skills classrooms.

With these conclusions in mind, the following research questions were explored:

1. To what extent is field dependence-independence (FDI) related to reading achievement as measured by the *Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT)*?
2. To what extent is reading instruction (i.e., skills orientation and whole language) related to reading achievement as measured by the *SDRT*?
3. To what extent are FDI and reading instruction jointly related to reading achievement as measured by the *SDRT*?

## METHOD

Participants in the study were 89 third grade students attending two elementary schools in a midwestern city school district. One school was selected because of its whole language orientation; the other because of its reading skills orientation. The following criteria were used to identify classrooms with a whole language orientation:

1. Basal readers were not used.
2. Workbooks and workpages that isolated reading skills were not present in the classrooms.
3. A literature or theme approach was used in an attempt to integrate the language arts curriculum.
4. There was a consistent effort on the part of the teacher to provide language experiences that were personally meaningful, purposeful, authentic, and relevant from a learner perspective.
5. A wide choice of literature, materials, and activities for learners was present in the classrooms.
6. Teachers maintained a holistic theoretical orientation to reading as measured by the *Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP)* (DeFord, 1979), administered to teachers during spring, 1990.

The following criteria were used to identify classrooms with a reading skills orientation:

1. A consistent, daily use of basal readers.
2. A reliance upon teachers' guides and other instructional support materials accompanying basal readers.
3. A segmented, reductionist language arts curriculum.
4. Less freedom and choice in the use of enrichment literature materials.
5. Teachers maintained an analytic theoretical orientation to reading as revealed by the *TORP*, administered in the spring of 1990.

When these criteria were applied, three classrooms with a whole language orientation (50 students) and two classrooms with a skills orientation (39 students) were identified.

During the fall of 1990, the *Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT), Green Level, Form G* (Karlsen, Madden, & Gardner, 1984a) was administered to determine students' entry-level reading ability. The *SDRT* comprises five subtests, as follows:

1. The words in the Auditory Vocabulary subtest represent the different parts of speech and were sampled from three general content areas: reading and literature, mathematics and science, and social studies and the arts. Pupils are asked to select the word or words that best fit the meaning of a sentence when both the item stem and the three options are dictated. Thus, the subtest provides information about pupils' language competence without requiring them to read.
2. Auditory Discrimination deals with the ability to discriminate among the sounds in words, and it measures pupils' ability to determine whether the same sound occurs at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of two dictated words.
3. Phonetic Analysis is concerned with the relationships between sounds and letters (phoneme-grapheme relationships). For each item in this subtest, pupils are asked to determine particular sounds in words and relate each sound to a common or variant spelling of that sound.
4. Structural Analysis has to do with the ability to decode words through the analysis of word parts, such as syllables, affixes, and root words. In Part A of this subtest, pupils are asked to identify the first syllable of two-syllable words; in Part B, pupils must identify meaningful word parts and blend these parts into real words.
5. At the Green Level, Literal and Inferential Comprehension are assessed both by short reading passages presented in a multiple-choice cloze format and by short

> passages followed by questions. The passages were written to represent a variety of subject-matter areas at a readability level (Dale Chall Readability Formula) appropriate for pupils in grades 3, 4, and 5. (Karlsen, Madden, & Gardner, 1984b, pp. 8–10)

The *SDRT* also provides a measure of total reading comprehension.

During the same period, the *Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT)* was administered to determine the extent to which learners held field dependent or field independent orientations. The *GEFT* contains three sections. Section one contains seven practice embedded figures and is not scored. Each of sections two and three contains nine embedded figures. Thus, a student receiving a high score on the *GEFT* (e.g., 17 of 18 items successfully disembedded) would be viewed as extremely field independent, and a student receiving a low score (e.g., 2 of 18 successfully disembedded) would be described as extremely field dependent. The time limit on the second and third sections of the *GEFT* was extended to 10 minutes each. Instructions, using an overhead transparency, included showing students how to locate and trace the hidden figure in the first two items of the first section. Such alternatives in testing procedures are recommended by the authors (Witkin, Oltman, Raskin, & Karp, 1971):

> It seems reasonable that, without changing the format of the test, adjustment of time limits and directions will make possible a flexible instrument for use with groups widely diversified in age and background. (p. 28)

During late spring of 1991, the *SDRT, Green Level, Form H* was administered to determine student reading achievement improvement. Students' scores on the *GEFT* were arranged in a frequency distribution, and the median was used as a cutoff for determining learners' field independence or field dependence. An analysis of covariance was performed to determine any significant relationships among the achievement variables. The *SDRT Green Level, Form G,* administered in the fall of 1990, served as the covariate.

## RESULTS

The Table reports the adjusted group means on the SDRT measures for the skills classrooms and whole language classrooms and for field dependent and field independent learners. The Table notes significant gains in SDRT scores over the school year.

A review of the data presented above reveals no significant relationships between FDI and Total Reading achievement as measured by *SDRT*. However, when one considers the various skill areas of the *SDRT*, the field independent subgroup demonstrated significantly higher achievement gains than the field dependent subgroup on the Structural Analysis subtest of the *SDRT*.

The remaining significant reading achievement gains are attributed to reading instruction. An examination of the data in the Table reveals that students in the reading skills subgroup showed significantly higher achievement gains in the Auditory Vocabulary Subtest of the *SDRT* than did students in the whole language subgroup. This was the sole subtest of the *SDRT* on which the

**TABLE**
**Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test Adjusted Group Means for Reading Instruction and Field Dependence-Independence**

| | Skills (n = 39) | Whole Language (n = 50) | Field Dependent (n = 45) | Field Independent (n = 44) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Auditory vocabulary | 67.38* | 60.42 | 63.29 | 63.34 |
| Auditory discrimination | 52.58 | 56.40 | 53.45 | 55.63 |
| Phonetic analysis | 46.41 | 48.71 | 47.67 | 47.63 |
| Structural analysis | 53.03 | 54.88 | 50.37 | 58.18* |
| Literal comprehension | 47.94 | 53.73* | 50.77 | 51.85 |
| Inferential comprehension | 50.55 | 58.28* | 55.63 | 54.04 |
| Total comprehension | 48.23 | 54.33* | 51.24 | 52.28 |
| Total reading | 52.80 | 56.70 | 54.29 | 55.58 |

*$p < .03$.

reading skills subgroup showed significantly higher achievement gains than the whole language subgroup.

On the Literal Comprehension as well as on the Inferential Comprehension subtests of the *SDRT*, combined to form the Total Comprehension measure, the whole language subgroup demonstrated significant achievement gains when compared to the reading skills subgroup.

No significant interactions among the independent variables were found. This makes it impossible to determine whether there is any combination of FDI learners and method of reading instruction that will produce significant achievement gains in overall reading achievement or in any of the skill areas of the *SDRT*.

## DISCUSSION

It will be recalled that the only significant relationship between FDI and reading achievement was in the Structural Analysis subtest of the *SDRT*. This finding is not unexpected. Subjects were asked to identify affixes and syllables embedded in larger words, a task at which field independent learners, because of their ability to isolate essential elements from context, should excel. It should be noted that the Structural Analysis subtest is the sole subtest that requires such ability.

Auditory Vocabulary was the sole subtest in which subjects in the skills classrooms demonstrated higher achievement gains than subjects in whole language classrooms. This finding is most easily explained by examining instructional practices in classroom settings. The study of isolated vocabulary is common in skills classrooms in which basal readers and spelling books are used. Thus, learners in skills classes should be able to recognize a greater number of words. The purpose of the Auditory Vocabulary subtest of the *SDRT* is to "provide information about pupils' language competence without requiring them to read" (Karlsen, Madden, & Gardner, 1984b, p. 8). Testing children on vocabulary with few contextual clues is clearly a task associated more with skills instruction than with whole language.

If children from skills classrooms perform better where isolated or small units of text are common, then students from whole language classrooms should perform better on tasks requiring comprehension of extended discourse. It will be recalled that subjects in the whole language subgroup, when compared to the skills subgroup demonstrated significantly higher achievement gains on the Literal and Inferential Comprehension subtests and the Total Comprehension measure.

No interaction was found between FDI, reading instruction, and reading achievement. Thus, the results of the present study make it impossible to recommend one method of reading instruction over another for either field dependent or field independent learners.

Perhaps the most notable finding of the present study was that, irrespective of field dependence-independence, subjects in the whole language subgroup showed significantly greater achievement gains, when compared to subjects in the skills subgroup, in reading comprehension. This may indicate that learning to read is a task that does not require disembedding on the part of learners, suggesting that FDI may not be a significant factor when planning reading instruction programs. This would further suggest that activities requiring disembedding in the reading instructional program (i.e., syllabication, structural analysis) may be unnecessary and possibly counterproductive.

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# Action Research: Classroom Teachers' Perceptions of Its Impact on the Teaching of Reading

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> This organization for teaching reading does not work with my class. I wish THEY [administrators] would do something about it.
>
> I learned some techniques at the workshop Saturday but I don't know if they would make a difference in my students' achievement.
>
> I'm really frustrated. There must be some things I could try that might make a difference for my ESOL students. I wish I knew what would work best.

We overhead comments such as these by classroom teachers who fathomed different and possibly improved ways of working with students in their classrooms. However, these teachers did not appear to know how to put these ideas into action. Instead, the emphasis seemed to be on what others might do to make the difference. In this era of focusing on excellence and empowerment in teaching, it has been advocated that one way to improve school and/or teacher practice is to promote and support teacher-initiated, classroom-based action research (Hovda & Kyle, 1984; Lewis, 1987; Maeroff, 1988; Sagor & Curley, 1991; Strickland, 1988). According to Cochran-Smith (1991), there are four obstacles that may prevent the initiation of such action research: (1) teachers are isolated and do not have the security to expose to others that something might not be working or to risk their current autonomy; (2) the occupational socialization of teachers is such that they view uncertainty and questioning as inappropriate behaviors; (3) the teaching knowledge base is at the consumer, not teacher-as-generator level; and (4) educational research has been used to blame teachers and its "findings have been reported in ways that are inaccessible and seemingly unrelated to the everyday realities of school and often seem distant, uninteresting, and impenetrable" (p. 280).

In light of these hypothesized obstacles, we wanted to find a way to help teachers reach a comfort level in questioning instructional practices and organization, and subsequently, in brainstorming, implementing, and monitoring change. The foci of this article are twofold: (1) to present the Teacher-Researcher Model used in a graduate reading course along with examples of the various questions generated and developed into short-term action research projects and (2) to share questionnaire results of teachers' perceptions once the project and course were completed and they were left to their own resources in their teaching of reading.

## THE TEACHER-RESEARCHER MODEL

A frequent and traditional exercise in a graduate reading course is to search the literature in depth on a self-selected topic and produce a paper that integrates the findings. Our model went one step further by requiring students to develop and research their own questions, thus making the literature review more personally meaningful. It was our intent to offer a framework that would both guide the teacher and parallel the structure of professional journal articles. In addition, we hoped our design and reporting process would impact positively upon the perceptions, attitudes, and practices of teachers and would encourage their doing further research on their own (Sardo-Brown, 1992). Our basic premise for the model was that when teachers have a theoretical understanding of why certain things work, they have more than intuitive wisdom on which to base effective methods of teaching. We further purport that as teachers begin to view themselves as researchers as well as practitioners, they become more analytical about their practices, more conscious as to why they do what they do, and more aware of the impact of their questioning and experimentation upon their teaching. Our Teacher-Researcher Model has three components: (1) planning, (2) implementation, and (3) reflection and reporting. We modeled and discussed each stage with our students so they felt comfortable and secure in conducting action research in their classrooms.

### Planning

During the planning stage, the teacher-researcher (1) identified a topic to investigate that was related to the reading and/or writing processes and that was personally significant; (2) conducted a literature review of at least eight related sources to help clarify the topic and provide a greater base for generating questions; (3) formulated a question (e.g., Does it make a difference whether students are given questions before or after reading?) or a hypothesis (e.g., It will make a difference in comprehension to present questions before reading rather than after reading.); and (4) identified the subjects, gathered necessary materials, and decided how to investigate the topic through such means as observation, test scores, analysis of video tapes, or questionnaires. At this time, the teacher-researcher also was encouraged to consider how the data would be analyzed to note the degree of effectiveness.

### Implementation

When plans were completed, the teacher-researcher conducted the study. It was important that he or she had on-going opportunities to discuss the research with both the instructor and fellow students. This helped neophyte researchers gain confidence, knowledge, and a sense of research community from each other.

### Reflection and Reporting

Once the research was completed, the teacher-researcher analyzed the data and reflected on the findings to determine implications, conclusions, and recommendations for their teaching and/or further research.

Reporting of the research was done in both written and oral form. The written report included (1) an introduction to the topic/problem and its significance to the researcher; (2) a stated question or hypothesis; (3) an integrated review of the literature; (4) a description of the methodology including selection of subjects and how the data were collected and analyzed; (5) a presentation of the findings; and (6) a discussion of implications, conclusions, and recommendations. A bibliography in APA style was expected and the attachment of any relevant examples or unique data was encouraged.

The oral report was an informal overview of the project to peers, with an emphasis on findings that may be useful in the classroom. Integral to the oral reporting was the opportunity for peers to ask the teacher-researcher questions, which often led to clarification, additional research ideas, or suggestions for replicating the research in a more effective way.

### Examples of Teacher-Researcher Questions

The course participants ranged from preschool through secondary levels. Students also represented a variety of fields and interests as evidenced by their questions (See Table 1).

## TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

The major purpose of having graduate students experience the Teacher-Researcher Model was to encourage teachers to develop an attitude that, by conducting action research, they can discover their own solutions to their own classroom problems. We, as instructors, could clearly see our students grow as teacher-researchers. However, we were curious about their perceptions once they left the course and decided to contact former students who currently were teaching.

To gauge teachers' perceptions of how conducting action research had affected their teaching and general attitude toward research, we mailed a questionnaire to all students who had taken the graduate Foundations of Reading course at our university within the past six years. As required by the course, all had designed and implemented their own action research projects as described previously. Only former students who currently held teaching positions were invited to participate. Twenty-eight teachers responded, 14 of whom taught at the elementary level, 3 at the middle school level, 5 at the secondary level, and 6 as reading specialists. Twenty-six taught in public schools.

**TABLE 1**
**Examples of Teacher-Researcher Question**

| Researcher | Grade Level(s) | Research Question |
|---|---|---|
| Wanda | 4th Grade | Does a fourth grader's ability to generate questions about a piece of narrative text reflect his or her level of reading comprehension? |
| Louise | Secondary ESL | Will creative dramatics be a useful technique for teaching new vocabulary to ESL students? |
| Frances | Kindergarten | Will informally building children's schema prior to their listening to a story enhance their comprehension? |
| Kate | 1st Grade | Will sign language be a useful technique when decoding new words? |
| Betty | Music, Elem. | Will teaching children songs for which there is an accompanying picture book enhance their ability to remember lyrics? |
| Tom | 3rd & 6th Grade | Will identifiable differences or trends that relate to gender be evident in the writing of third and sixth graders who are given story starters that introduce either a male or female character? |
| Lori | Secondary & Special needs | Will study strategies help reduce test anxiety among secondary high school students with learning disabilities? |
| Diane | Preschool | Do certain themed play centers yield greater literacy experiences than others? |
| Lark | Kindergarten & 2nd Grade | What are the differences in realizing the sources information between groups taught the QAR and of groups not taught the QAR? |
| Susan | 2nd & 4th Grade | Do student authors need an illustrating process to complement their writing process? |
| Carol | 2nd Grade | Will the use of retelling used in conjunction with a DRA strategy of preparation and follow- up noticeably improve students' comprehension of what they had read in comparison with the DRA strategy alone? |
| Cheryl | 6th Grade | Do graphic organizers presented prior to reading benefit student comprehension? |

One taught in a Catholic elementary school and another other in a private, "progressive" school. Most of the respondents worked for rural school districts. Two were employed in suburban schools and two in city schools.

The questionnaire consisted of five questions, each designed to elicit from teachers their perceptions of the impact of the action research project on their subsequent teaching, on their attitude toward research, and on their empowerment as decision makers. Each question required a choice of "Yes," "No," or "Somewhat." Respondents were encouraged to elaborate on each answer by adding additional written comments.

## FINDINGS

The five questions, as well as the results by percentage, are depicted in Table 2. We have combined the "yes" and "somewhat" responses for each question since we feel that both indicate positive perceptions.

The written comments provided by the teachers for each question proved to be extremely illuminating. Selected comments, categorized by individual questions, are provided below.

1. Do you feel your "kid-watching" (observational) ability has changed as a result of conducting action research?
   - Yes, the single-mindedness of this focused observation made me see insights I wouldn't have noticed otherwise.
   - Yes, I am better able to use kid watching diagnostically rather than haphazardly.

**TABLE 2**
**Teacher-As-Researcher Questionnaire Responses**

1. Do you feel your "kid-watching" (observation) ability has changed as a result of conducting action research?

   Yes/Somewhat 79% No 21%

2. Are you more aware of and/or interested in research presented in professional journals of meetings?

   Yes/Somewhat 79% No 21%

3. Did the action research conducted for the course have an impact on your teaching?

   Yes/Somewhat 89% No 11%

4. After doing action research, do you feel "empowered" as a decision-maker in your classroom and/or school?

   Yes/Somewhat 86% No 14%

5. Have you conducted or do you plan to conduct any action research projects?

   Yes/Somewhat 61% No 39%

2. Are you more aware of and/or interested in research presented in professional journals or meetings?
    - Yes, I've always been aware of research but having participated in it made me realize the power of research as well as some of its subjectivity.
    - Yes, I have always been interested in research. The action research project helped me realize that "ordinary" teachers can do it.
    - Yes, now I subscribe to a reading journal involving more research and I refer to it. I read fewer "make-it" idea magazines and more research-based articles.
    - Yes, I understand and appreciate the planning and forethought and work involved, as well as the effort needed to make the results valid.
3. Did the action research conducted for the course have an impact on your teaching?
    - Yes, my research was on reading aloud. I have developed a parent workshop on reading aloud to children. I used my local research to present a convincing argument!
    - Yes, my action research dealt with home environment and reading ability. I feel myself "tuning" in to students' home environments, which helps me understand the students' reading habits and each student as a whole.
    - Yes, my research involved teachers' choice in "read aloud" books in regards to male and/or female protagonists. It made me aware of not only the teachers who responded to my survey but also of the number of heavily weighted male protagonist books I was selecting.
4. After doing action research, do you feel "empowered" as a decision maker in your classroom and/or school?
    - Yes, I have never doubted the teacher-as-decision-maker concept. The research made me even more keenly aware of the influence a teacher has over learning and the interplay between teacher and student.
    - Yes, I have more background knowledge to help me decide what will and will not work in my classroom.
    - Somewhat. Action research gives you answers, answers give you understanding. This understanding definitely empowers you.
    - Yes, I can see how important each decision a teacher makes can be.
5. Have you conducted or do you plan to conduct any action research projects?
    - Yes, I plan to develop case studies on special reading challenges and develop the studies into a functional program.
    - Yes, I would like to do research to find out if the overorganizing of our children (organized preschool, organized sports, scouts, organized play groups, etc.) instead of free time and free play has stifled their creativity, their reading ability, and their imaginations.
    - Somewhat, I'd like to try action research in the area of cooperative learning.
    - Somewhat, I do a considerable amount of research in the course of my

teaching, but it is much more informal than that done for my coursework. Time is the critical factor, and there is never enough of it!

- No, not enough time.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study point to several identifiable conclusions. On the whole, teachers perceived that they benefited from conducting action research. They felt that it improved their observational abilities and made them more effective teachers. Carrying out a research study made the teachers more aware of and interested in reading research in professional journals; many respondents reported that they now subscribe to *The Reading Teacher* and *Journal of Reading*. While many believed that empowerment as a decision maker stems from actual teaching experience rather than from conducting research, some teachers did acknowledge that seeking answers to one's questions is a fulfilling and necessary requisite in teaching.

A good number of the respondents reported that they planned to conduct other research projects in their classrooms. A few said they would like to but probably would not. One frustration that clearly emerged was that time constraints and numerous job responsibilities stood in the way of pursuing future research projects. This study suggests that teachers perceive multiple benefits from conducting action research in their classrooms. Based on the positive responses we received to our questionnaire, we recommend the following:

1. University teachers should consider including an action research project as an assignment in graduate reading courses. At the preservice education level, a variation of the assignment could be implemented. Farnan and Fearn (1992) have developed one possible model.
2. Teachers should be encouraged to share the results of their research with others. This could occur through in-service education, local and regional professional meetings, or state conferences. Within graduate programs, informal get-togethers to discuss on-going research can be established and supported by university faculty.
3. Partnerships should be established between local school districts and the university to foster and encourage ongoing classroom research.
4. Monetary support for conducting research must be provided. For example, the Research Committee of the Keystone State Reading Association of Pennsylvania offers grants of up to $500 to classroom teachers wishing to conduct action research in reading.

Clearly, action research can be a key to unlocking the doors to teacher empowerment and effective reading instruction. Helping teachers realize that they can answer their own instructional questions—that they are their own best experts—ultimately will improve instruction and strengthen the profession.

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# INQUIRIES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

# The Process and Promise of Portfolio Assessment in Teacher Education Programs: Impact on Students' Knowledge, Beliefs, and Practices

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## CATALYST

During the 1990 spring semester, I was preparing to teach a trial graduate course in literacy education entitled "Whole Language: Issues and Implications." I had developed this course in response to the demands from teachers in the field who wanted to take a serious look at changes in the way that literacy instruction in elementary schools was being conceptualized. As I began to outline the content for this course, I realized that along with discussing changing paradigms related to literacy instruction (Goodman, 1986), I would also need to address changing paradigms related to literacy assessment (Harp, 1991). For some time, literacy educators have been concerned about the gap between the way literacy is taught and the way literacy is assessed. The field had begun to quickly focus on portfolio assessment as the primary alternative to traditional assessment measures (Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991). I knew that the issue of portfolio assessment would require a place within my outline of content for this course.

At the same time, Marilyn Ohlhausen, a colleague from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, was embarking on a similar journey. Her uneasiness with traditional assessment techniques in college graduate courses—especially those courses that often were critical of such assessment—caused her to think about using an alternative form of assessment in her initial teaching of a graduate course focused on whole language. While I grappled with how best to help my students understand the content of portfolio assessment, Marilyn grappled with the question of how to align her own assessment with the holistic practices she was trying to implement in her college teaching. While we came at this issue from different perspectives, we arrived at a similar solution. We both decided to incorporate a portfolio self-evaluation component in our courses. I concluded the hands-on experience would be the best way for students to acquire knowledge about portfolios. Marilyn concluded that the hands-on experience would help her align her assessment and instructional practices. We decided to travel together on this journey. Our recent discovery of BITNET allowed us to stay in constant contact through E-Mail. We also shared samples of forms, letters, and portfolio evidence through postal mail. We decided to make our efforts the focus of collaborative research, and that further motivated us to stay in contact with one another as we worked through this significant change in our own practice.

## THE PROCESS

The process has continued to evolve since our initial attempts to use portfolio assessment in teacher education classes. It also has varied somewhat depending on the instructor, the course, and the students. What has emerged, however, is a common set of instructional practices to define and guide the portfolio process. In courses in which I use a portfolio component, students are asked to develop a learning portfolio that provides evidence that they have (1) enhanced their thinking, (2) improved their (future) instructional practice, and (3) examined their personal literacy habits. At the end of the course, students are asked to provide a written evaluation of their own learning—their growth and change. The written evaluation usually focuses on the three identified outcomes. However, students are allowed to define the outcomes by which their growth and change may be evaluated. Some students may choose to emphasize only one or two of the three areas based on their personal or professional needs. Similarly, some students may choose to add an extra outcome to move their learning in a direction different from the three criteria. Whatever outcomes students choose, they must be able to support their final self-evaluation decision by using evidence assembled in their learning portfolios. Changes in thinking might be seen in an ongoing response journal where reactions to readings, class discussions, and other experiences are recorded. Captioned photographs and samples of student work might show a major change in instructional practices. A recreational reading log or samples of personal writing might demonstrate changes in personal literacy habits. Students assemble that evidence which best captures the major changes they make in each of these areas. At the end of the semester, instructors may choose to schedule portfolio conferences with students so that students can orally present their evidence and defend their self-evaluation decisions. Instructors may prefer to review the portfolios on their own. This requires that students provide more extensive written comments within their portfolios to explain their evidence. We have done the final reviews both ways. Marilyn prefers the former method, and I prefer the latter. Instructors may want to try it both ways and decide which is better for them.

### Introducing the Process

Portfolio assessment is a fairly new concept to most of our students. At this time, our teacher education programs do not involve portfolio documentation as an entrance or exit requirement. For most students, this is their first encounter with the process from the perspective of learners. Initially, we were very careful not to be too directive with our guidelines. We feared that the more teacher directed our efforts became, the less responsibility students would take for their own learning and assessment. On the other hand, we quickly observed that too little direction left many students struggling with the process. As we continued to work with portfolios, we realized that we would need to add clarity to the process without becoming too directive.

It is critical that during the first few class meetings, students begin to discover the essence of this alternative form of assessment. We have used several techniques that seem to work well in adding clarity to the process. In the first class following the introduction of the portfolio component, students are asked to reflect on two questions: (1) Have you learned anything during or since our first class? and (2) How could you prove to someone else what you have learned? Working together, our students begin to identify different ways to document learning, such as journal entries, logs of reading and writing, work samples, audio and videotapes, feedback from students, and written reports from outside observers. By doing this, students begin to discover the techniques they may need to provide evidence of growth and change in their portfolios.

Next, students are asked to begin to construct embryonic portfolios. During the third week of class, these initial attempts at the physical construction of portfolios are shared with classmates, allowing peers to add clarification to the process. After that initial sharing, students are asked to submit "Dear Reviewer" letters to the instructor. These letters attempt to outline initial plans developed by students for their portfolios. It is a low-risk, manageable way for the instructor to provide students with individual feedback regarding their goals, plans, and initial understanding of the portfolio process. This usually is done during the fourth week of class.

We have discovered that the most critical learner task during the initial stage of the portfolio process is the need to engage in self-assessment. We invite students to examine who they are as teachers, learners, readers, and writers. Some students rely on standard self-evaluation tools to look at themselves in these areas. They might use a theoretical orientation scale to see where they are philosophically as teachers, or they might use an adult reading attitude survey to look at themselves as readers. In most cases, however, students choose to write brief biographical reflections about who they are as learners, teachers, readers, and writers. They look at their roots, current behaviors, and future hopes. We believe students can best begin to identify significant, personal goals from which to guide their own learning when they have sincerely and thoughtfully looked at themselves.

If students are to profit from the portfolio process, they must set reasonable goals that will help them to address genuine needs discovered in their self-assessments. For example, if a student's self-assessment of personal habits revealed that she always found time for recreational reading in her life, however, she never felt comfortable with who she was as a writer, then the student might set a goal that helps her address the genuine need surfaced in her self-assessment—feeling more comfortable with who she is as a writer. The instructor may need to assist the student in seeing this need and setting a goal toward which to work.

Like many classroom teachers, I am still required to assign letter grades to students' performance in my courses. The portfolio process invites students to play a significant role in determining that grade. To address my concerns about students maintaining appropriate standards and promoting rigor in the portfolio process, I have recently begun to introduce the students to the concept of a rubric (Routman, 1991) to guide their efforts. For example, in one graduate course, students were asked to identify characteristics of A-level graduate work. These characteristics were compiled and categorized. Students reviewed the categories and worked on reaching consensus about the categories. The end result was a group-constructed rubric defining the expectations for A-level graduate work—expectations that would guide the portfolio process and influence the evaluation of students' growth and change.

### Sustaining the Process

The line between assessment and instruction begins to blur once the portfolio process is underway. We have discovered that one of the most effective ways to sustain the process is by making the process an integral part of instruction. Students are provided with regular opportunities to share with peers what they are learning and how they are documenting their learning. Students use one another as resources and begin to construct their own solutions to problems rather than rely on the teacher for feedback. Class time may also include minilessons about the portfolio process, such as how to streamline the presentation of evidence or how to caption evidence so that it effectively informs an outside reviewer about the learner's growth and change. By making the process an integral part of the class, we also emphasize the need for a sustained, ongoing effort in this form of self-directed learning. This type of effort, along with the subsequent documentation of progress toward goals, is the critical learner task for this phase of the portfolio process.

About midway through the semester, students are asked to write a second "Dear Reviewer" letter. This is to be turned in to the instructor along with the in-progress portfolio. We usually stagger this collection of portfolios because the review process often involves extensive feedback regarding each student's progress and ability to document that progress. Students examine where they are and make any necessary mid-course adjustments in their goals and plans. Instructors sense where students are and provide feedback suggesting needed mid-course adjustments.

### Reaching Closure

Eventually the students need to bring the portfolio process to an end—at least temporarily. They finish collecting and assembling their evidence and return to the process of self-evaluation. This time they are invited to reflect on the growth and change that has resulted from their participation in the course. Many students reuse tools and techniques that they had used at the beginning of the course to reexamine where they are and to discover whether learning had taken place. They consider the evidence they have assembled as they make and support their self-evaluative grading decision. In class, we invite learners to use the criteria from the previously constructed rubric to evaluate themselves. Grading oneself is often a very difficult task for most learners and, at times, involves much internal conflict. Nevertheless, we believe that it is valuable to place some of the responsibility for the final grade in the hands of learners. The grading decision, written rationale, and completed portfolio are then shared with the instructor. Through written feedback or an individual conference, the instructor responds to, or if necessary, challenges the student's decision.

## THE FINAL PRODUCTS

The personalized nature of the portfolio process (Ohlhausen & Ford, 1990, 1992) is one of the most attractive features of the portfolio assessment process. This feature, however, makes it nearly impossible to collectively describe the portfolios developed by our students. The worlds in which our students learn, teach, and use language are very different. I remember the first time I reviewed portfolios. After responding to one teacher whose literate world inside and outside of school was influenced by a passion for theater, I picked up the next portfolio and walked through the life of a teacher whose literate world included returning home each evening to help run a family dairy farm. During another semester, I remember how one of my students documented application of her learning by showing changes in the way she was assisting the literacy growth of her daughter with Down's Syndrome. Another student in the same class showed how what she had learned would help her restructure the personal finance courses she taught at the local community college.

When portfolio assessment works best, it is because students clearly conceptualize the essence of self-directed inquiry. They are able to seize the opportunity provided by the portfolio process to direct and document their own learning. Not all of our students are successful in seizing that opportunity. However, most are. Their portfolios provide us with evidence that this process helps learners realize that they could and should be responsible for their own learning. One of the most recent challenges for me has been to maintain my own portfolio as a way of directing and documenting my own professional development. Like my students, sometimes I am more successful with this process than at other times. By maintaining my own portfolio, the benefits are two-fold: I am able to model the process for my students by sharing my own experience, and the self-assessment and goal setting inherent in the process help to focus my professional efforts during that semester.

## OUR INQUIRY

For us, the answer was clear. Portfolios not only held an attractive appeal as an alternative assessment tool (Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991), but also had tremendous value as a tool for altering our own instruction (Vavrus, 1990). In the past, our students' learning was often defined by our expectations and was sustained only for the duration of the course. The portfolio process seemed to provide an avenue for encouraging an ongoing learning process. Portfolio assessment invited students to direct and document their own learning. It engaged students in a continual process of self-reflection, goal setting, and attempts to change. It returned much of the responsibility for defining both the outcomes and the timetable for learning to the learner. We have continued to use portfolios in at least one course in each of the semesters following our initial experience.

The question we began asking ourselves, however, related not to our instructional and assessment practices but to the practices of our students: How would the experience of constructing a learning portfolio in a teacher education course influence the knowledge, beliefs, and practices of teachers in their own classrooms? We began to investigate that question by surveying teachers who had completed courses in which they had constructed learning portfolios.

### Initial Survey

Our preliminary survey was conducted in the fall of 1990 and involved 75 teachers enrolled in four courses in which we had first used portfolio assessment (Ohlhausen & Ford, 1990). Thirty-seven teachers returned the follow-up surveys. In the preliminary surveys, over 80% of the teachers indicated that they had little or no prior knowledge about portfolio assessment before the class began. The results of the follow-up survey indicated that this was no longer the case. Ninety percent of the responding teachers indicated, from a list of possible influences (readings, staff development, talking with others, etc.), that one of the most significant experiences that led to the expansion of their knowledge base was the direct experience of constructing their own portfolios. Five significant insights had emerged. Portfolio assessment (1) was an effective way to document growth and provide a record of change; (2) allowed assessment to become more personalized; (3) required reflective thinking, which encouraged self-discovery and evaluation; (4) seemed more authentic, accurate, and broader in scope than traditional assessment; and (5) assisted the learner in being more on task, focused, organized, and accountable. In the follow-up survey, the majority of teachers also indicated that they had continued to seek out other opportunities to learn more about portfolio assessment after the class had ended. Did the knowledge influence practice?

Surveys indicated that 46% of the teachers, even though they taught in districts where portfolio assessment had not been mandated, had voluntarily implemented some form of portfolio assessment with their students.

### Additional Investigation

During the fall of 1991, Marilyn and I widened the scope of our survey to include all of the 230 students who had now participated in at least one of the 10 classes we had offered using portfolio assessment. Half of the students responded. We looked specifically at questions related to beliefs, attitudes, and practices regarding portfolio assessment (Ford & Ohlhausen, 1991). Results indicated that teacher knowledge regarding portfolio assessment had been enhanced, especially by three class-related experiences: constructing their own portfolios, receiving responses from instructors, and sharing their portfolios with peers. Beyond the class, teachers indicated that reading professional journals and continuing to develop their portfolios had added to their knowledge base.

Over 95% of the teachers indicated that their beliefs about assessment had changed over the past few years. Over 90% agreed or strongly agreed with three significant beliefs about assessment: assessment should be a continuous ongoing process, it should be multidimensional, and it should provide for active collaboration by both the teacher and the student (Valencia, 1990). All three of these beliefs are evident in the portfolio process.

Finally, when examining their practices, 75% of the teachers had indicated prior to the class that they were not using any form of portfolio assessment in their classroom. Of those responding in the follow-up survey, only 12% indicated that they were still not using portfolios in their own teaching. Not only did more teachers begin to explore portfolio assessment in their own classrooms, but also many had reconceptualized aspects of portfolios. For example, 49% of the teachers reported that they now involved students in the selection of evidence for inclusion in the portfolios.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Over the past two years, Marilyn and I have seen evidence of the value in changing our own assessment procedures so that students could become actively involved in constructing their own understandings about portfolios. We saw signs that we had positively influenced teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices regarding alternative forms of assessment. We also saw signs that by involving teachers in directing, documenting, and evaluating their own learning, they began to change their views about what it means to be a lifelong learner. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we discovered the power of portfolios to assist us in actually touching and changing the lives of our students as literate persons.

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# Activities for Restructuring Reading Education Courses for Preservice Teachers

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Increasingly, teacher educators are scrutinizing how they prepare undergraduate education majors to become teachers of reading (see Alvermann, 1990). A focal point of this attention has been the reading methods course typically required of preservice teachers. Teacher educators have expressed dissatisfaction with conventional models for teaching such courses because these models do not seem to effect notable, long-term improvements in reading instruction (e.g., Reinking, Mealey, & Ridgeway, 1993). Conventional models may reinforce the perception that reading professors hold the key to solving the riddle of literacy instruction, which works against empowering teachers as decision makers (Duffy, 1991). Likewise, conventional models of teacher education tend to emphasize content knowledge and thus do not address directly the different perceptions of novice and expert teachers (Roehler, Duffy, Hermann, Conley, & Johnson, 1988; Sabers, Cushing, & Berliner, 1991).

Concerns about the limitations of conventional reading methods courses have generated interest in an inquiry model of teaching that is often supported by a social constructivist view of learning. An inquiry model of teaching is characterized by terms such as "reflective practice," "reflection-in-action," and "teacher as decision maker" (Calderhead, 1989; Schon, 1987). The social constructivist view asserts that instruction must be a process of social interaction in which teachers and learners interpret the meaning of classroom discourse differently (Gavalek, 1986). Teaching in this view is a process by which a teacher facilitates the interplay of different meanings so that cognitive understandings may undergo change (Newman, Cole, & Griffin, 1989). Learning in this view is an intensely personal construction of meaning and understanding.

Several educators and researchers have begun to experiment with ways to implement an inquiry model into the teaching of reading methods courses, in most cases by increasing students' involvement in and analysis of actual or simulated teaching experiences. For example, Hermann and Sarrachino (1991) extended the length of a reading methods course, provided graduate student mentors, and created a literacy tutoring program; Hollingsworth (1988) paired student teachers and demonstrated lessons in classrooms; and Risko, Yount, and Towell (1991) used video tapes to involve students in shared learning contexts to analyze the problems facing teachers.

However, beyond increasing preservice teachers' opportunities for experiencing and analyzing classroom teaching, there has been little attention to developing ways to foster inquiry and social constructivist goals when instructors meet with preservice teachers in the college classroom. Reading professors who wish to change the way they approach teaching reading methods courses face many challenges, not the least of which is determining what might replace or supplement conventional practices such as required reading from a single textbook, lectures, assignments, exams, and so forth. How can a course be designed to encourage students to become more reflective about their own learning, to integrate productive social interaction into learning, to counter students' perception that instructors wear the mantle of all-knowing authority, and to present content in a way that recognizes a multiplicity of meanings? Or, more practically, how can changes be implemented in a way that meets the instructor's obligation to conform to the institution's and students' expectations (Duffy, 1991) in assigning grades? Instructors who wish to deviate significantly from conventional approaches to college teaching may risk alienating administrators, colleagues, and their students. Thus, given a lack of concrete ideas for restructuring their courses and the attendant risks of deviating from convention, instructors maybe hesitant to alter radically their approach to teaching reading methods courses.

To address these problems, in this paper we outline several activities and course adaptations that we have found to be useful in our efforts to implement an inquiry model and a social constructivist perspective into our reading methods courses. For this paper (i.e., post hoc to our development and use of these activities) we have grouped these activities into categories, although their purposes often cut across several of the categories listed. The fact that we are able to group them suggests to us that these may be critical areas of concern for restructuring reading education courses for preservice teachers. Thus, we offer them as documentation for those interested in how college teachers attempt to have a greater effect on preservice teacher education and as suggestions for those interested in ideas to use in their own teaching.

## CATEGORIES OF ACTIVITIES

Each of the following categories represents a focus or issue emerging from our attempts to implement a social constructivist view in our respective sections of an undergraduate reading methods course. We wish to note that the course in which we implemented these activities is the first in a two-course sequence on reading methods required of all elementary education majors. A field-based experience is part of the second course but not the first. Thus, the activities outlined below are limited to those that can occur in a course based entirely in the college classroom.

### Focusing on Inquiry, Diverse Perspectives, and the Relativity of Meaning

In our courses we adopt an inquiry model, which we believe encourages students to see teaching as managing dilemmas rather than solving problems. This point of view implies that there are no single right answers for all the questions about teaching literacy, that knowledgeable professionals may disagree, that underlying principles are more important than isolated facts, that knowing why precedes knowing how, and that reflection and analysis are synonymous with good teaching. We encourage students not to look to us for authoritative answers but to use us as resources for locating information relevant to an open-ended quest for knowledge and understanding. The following activities are aimed at establishing and maintaining this perspective.

**Multiple texts.** Instead of using a single text with assigned readings, we have made available a library of methods texts for preservice teachers to use in a variety of activities throughout the course (academic departments and individual faculty typically accumulate a library of such texts). For example, at the beginning of the course we distribute a different methods text to each student. Before the next class, students are asked to browse through the text they were given while noting major topics and themes. They are encouraged to read a chapter on a topic they found interesting. In class, students are invited to compare their respective texts in small groups, to discuss the chapter they read, and to provide reasons for choosing the chapter. A subsequent larger group discussion can reveal much about the differing perspectives, attitudes, and beliefs students bring to the course. The library of texts can be used throughout the course as well. For example, students may want to compare how two authors cover the same topic. Or a student who makes a comment about an issue might be advised by another student to read a good chapter on the issue in a particular text. As students become more familiar with texts, they could be asked to explain which one they would recommend using in a course with a single text.

**Identifying good questions.** An activity we have used for evaluation is to have students generate a list of good questions about a particular topic or issue. This activity can be extended by creating a bibliography of readings that provides thought-provoking but divergent responses to these questions.

**Good quotes.** An activity that engages preservice teachers in divergent thinking about complex issues is to collect interesting quotes that pertain to different aspects of education (and maybe even a few that don't directly relate to education). Quotes can be printed on small strips of paper. The strips are shuffled and each student is given three. Students move freely around the room comparing quotes, trading when they find one that is more personally meaningful. The discussion that follows also provides rich opportunities for social interaction.

### Selecting and Covering Content That Is Personally Meaningful

In a social constructivist view, learning is an intensely personal construction of meaning and understanding. This perspective has made us more consciously aware that, as instructors, we have different agendas than do many of our students. We believe it is necessary to externalize students' and instructors' agendas in order to explore ways of personalizing meaning and thus to present content in a way that is likely to have immediate and long-term effects on learning and teaching performance. Topical outlines on a conventional course syllabus that is covered in lockstep fashion impose our priorities and logic on students who may suppress their own views and meanings. We offer the following two activities as alternatives designed to address these issues.

**Special interest groups.** Small groups of three to five class members with mutual interests are formed to explore a topic. These groups work independently to identify a set of good questions and to compile sources of information. We meet for several consultations with the group to give them guidance and help clarify the questions about the topic and to guide them towards sources of information. We have also had each of these Special Interest Groups report their work to other class members in a variety of ways.

**Student-centered prioritizing of content.** Instead of the instructor passing out a syllabus with an outline of major topics and the order in which they will be considered, we have asked students to generate and prioritize topics for the instructor to address in class. This approach works much better if the students have had an opportunity to investigate what seems to be the major topics associated with teaching reading (e.g., see the ideas under multiple texts). It can be implemented by brainstorming topics that might be considered and then having students prioritize the list. Instead of dealing with less popular topics separately at the end of the course, we weave them into discussions of topics students have identified as more important.

### Social Interaction

In the social constructivist view, learning takes place through social interaction because it provides an opportunity for different meanings to become apparent (Gavalek, 1986). We found the following activities to facilitate constructive social interaction in our courses.

**Focus groups.** Regular meetings between the instructor and small groups of students can serve an important function when instructors radically restructure reading education courses. These groups may be selected in a variety of ways and can meet for a variety of purposes. For example, we have used them to provide an opportunity for students to react to their own learning in the course and to discuss how the course is or isn't meeting their needs. These sessions foster the positive interpersonal relations and sense of openness that help sustain students' tolerance of approaches that may make them feel uncomfortable and anxious.

**Class legacy of readings.** Through a variety of activities, students in our classes are encouraged to read broadly about topics and issues pertaining to the development of literacy in children. At the end of the course, each student was asked to contribute his or her favorite reading (usually an article or chapter from a book) to a class legacy of readings. Each student contributes a copy of the reading and a brief explanation of why she or he believes the reading was important. The articles and explanations are bound and put on reserve for students in future semesters to use as a resource. We have found that activities such as this help create a community of readers and writers among our students. By sharing our own readings and interests, we have also been pleased to note that our undergraduates include us in that community by giving us readings they believe will interest us.

**Dialogue journals.** Dialogue journals are aimed at increasing communication between instructors and students and we have found them to be useful in our efforts to restructure our courses. Entries may provide topics for discussion, reactions to readings or class discussions, and questions that need to be addressed. We have also had students exchange dialogue journals with each other in addition to the instructor.

### Evaluation and Grading

Students' concerns for grades present a barrier to implementing an inquiry model of instruction and to accomplishing social constructivist goals for learning (Duffy, 1991). Most students are consciously aware that grades are ultimately secondary to their learning, but a concern for grades is frequently too visceral to be treated lightly by the instructor. And, in most instances, instructors may not have the option to dispense with assigning letter grades. We addressed these issues in the following ways.

**Topics-in-literacy fair.** This idea might be used as an extension of the special interest groups activity described previously. Small groups of students work together to plan and develop an information booth for a topics-in-literacy fair. The fair could be coordinated with other course sections or content areas. Each visitor to a booth at the fair might complete an evaluation form, and the cumulative results of these forms could figure in students' course evaluations.

**Peer-reviewed portfolios.** One of us has used a student-generated portfolio with broad guidelines for its creation and evaluation as the sole source of determining grades. This approach gives students great freedom but may result in anxiety about the course grade. It also creates a dilemma for instructors who must rely on relatively subjective arguments for justifying a grade. One way to address this dilemma is to use a combination of peer and expert evaluation. For example, in the course using the portfolio as the sole source for a grade, portfolios were evaluated independently by one peer evaluator, one graduate student evaluator, and the instructor, all of whom used a class-generated evaluation form.

### Increasing Students' Morale and Commitment

Restructuring reading courses for preservice teachers may significantly challenge their schema and expectations. Students may be leery of a course that does not have a conventional outline, midterm and final exams, and so forth. Many students will be anxious about their grades and the degree to which they are being prepared to teach reading. We have used the following activities to increase students' morale and their commitment to the course.

**Instructor's portfolio.** When asking students to generate a portfolio for assessment, instructors may gain credibility with students by creating their own portfolio to document their learning. Instructors can share their thoughts about the construction of their portfolio and seek suggestions for students. When one of us tried this, it was interesting to note that students began to be on the lookout for readings and other sources of information for his portfolio. That portfolio focused on his learning about teaching preservice teachers through the course and through outside reading and experience.

**Providing answers to test items.** It is likely that experienced instructors will have a bank of items that can be used on traditional tests. In shifting to a more constructivist viewpoint, it is unlikely that these items will be useful, even if the instructor wishes to continue giving written exams. However, we have found that when conventional exams are not used and the presentation of course content is less structured, many students become worried that they are not learning important information, which will put them at a disadvantage when they begin teaching. One way we countered this concern is by putting a test item bank with a separate answer key on reserve. Students could try to answer the items, check their own responses, research items that puzzle them, and bring up items for discussion in class.

**Ask the Professor.** Preservice teachers may become frustrated and anxious when instructors routinely pose questions rather than dispense information and when they resist answering students' questions definitively and authoritatively. Students (and instructors) may need occasional relief from this frustration and anxiety. One way we accomplished this aim was to periodically have a specific time period that we identified as "Ask the Professor." This activity is like a press conference during which students pose questions and the professor responds directly. Identifying this activity as a special category deviating from the norm serves to highlight differences between conventional and constructivist approaches to teaching. It is interesting to note that this idea came out of a focus group discussion with students.

## FINAL WORDS OF CAUTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Instructors who wish to restructure reading education courses must take risks and they must be prepared to deal with the inevitable stress that arises from making changes. Instructors who restructure their courses along the lines we have outlined may need to tolerate student ambivalence, confusion, and antagonism. Although these reactions are not uncommon in any approach to college teaching, we have found that they are more intense when we restructure our courses. On the other hand, we have been sustained through trials and tribulations by many students who thrive when liberated to direct their own learning and who become intimately involved with the issues surrounding the development of literacy. We see evidence that we are making a difference in the professional development of many of our students in a way that we had not seen previously.

Restructuring reading education courses for preservice teachers as described in this paper can be exciting and rewarding, but it is not for the timid. In exploring what for us is uncharted territory, we, along with our students, have experienced more intensely the highs and lows that inevitably accompany teaching and learning. We have also learned much about our own professional competence, insecurities, and beliefs. Nonetheless, exploring this new territory has rejuvenated our efforts to counter the unacceptable premise that our undergraduate reading methods courses have no lasting effect on improving instruction in schools.

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# Utilizing Literature as a Vehicle for Teaching about Multicultural Education in a Reading Methods Course

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For teacher educators, multicultural education has a double thrust. First, we must be aware of what teachers should know in order to meet the individual needs of all children in our culturally diverse and pluralistic society and foster cultural awareness and understanding in all children. Second, we must address the larger multicultural context in which children and their teachers will live and communicate. Our efforts, therefore, must be focused both on teachers and on their future pupils.

In this paper, we share the content and instructional plan for an elementary reading methods course with a multicultural education focus. An introduction, which includes a rationale and a definition, is followed by a description of how we use children's literature to integrate multicultural content into our curriculum.

## RATIONALE

The incorporation of multicultural education in an elementary reading methods course is a vital necessity. Mandates from accrediting agencies (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 1981) and demands from students for a broader cultural base in teacher education programs have spurred attempts to deal more equitably with multiculturalism in the university classroom. These mandates and demands, along with our belief that there is a need for a wider, more sympathetic understanding of peoples and their cultures, prompted us to reevaluate our reading methods course. We believed it important to foster a respect for all people while developing awareness and appreciation for the contributions of all groups to American culture (Musser & Freeman, 1989).

Burstein and Cabello (1989) note that often teachers fail to give consideration to students' diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences and, as a result, teachers tend to foster academic failure rather than success for students. Preservice teachers need to accept the responsibility for educating all children from a multicultural perspective. Ethnic minority populations are expected to increase rapidly in the next century, and "advances in technology no longer permit nations such as ours with a predominantly Caucasian European-heritage population to live in isolation from people of color" (Nickolai-Mays & Oulahan, 1991, p. 22). The need to move our teacher education students, so as to move the pupils they will teach, to broader levels of awareness and understanding is imperative.

## DEFINING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Finding a single definition of multicultural education can be problematic. Some of the literature tends to categorize it solely upon a racial and/or ethnic base, which results in multiethnic rather than multicultural education. The definition we have chosen encompasses a much broader conception, including the former bases, but also incorporating such facets as gender, disabilities and abilities, language, regional groups, religion, and age. To further establish a foundation for the ideas espoused in this writing, we have turned to the NCATE (1981, p. 4–5) definition of multicultural education:

> preparation for social, political, and economic realities that individuals experience in culturally diverse and complex human encounters.... This preparation provides a process by which an individual develops competencies for perceiving, believing, evaluating and behaving in differential cultural settings.... Multicultural education could include, but not be limited to, experiences which promote analytical and evaluative abilities to confront issues such as participatory democracy, racism, sexism, and the parity of power.... Linguistic variations and diverse learning styles [must be examined] as a basis for the development of appropriate teaching strategies.

## INFUSING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION INTO OUR CURRICULUM

In our teacher education classroom, the philosophical basis for our instruction is a belief that learning occurs when the material to be learned is meaningful and grounded in the language and experiences of the learner. By creating classroom environments that provide active hands-on learning and practice with teacher support, we are modeling for our preservice teachers the same kinds of teaching we believe will prove most effective for their culturally diverse pupils' learning. Such learning is child centered, often social in nature, supported by both peers and adults, and literacy oriented.

Several years ago, our reading methods course paid only lip service to the concept of multiculturalism. We read in class a mix of books representative of many cultures, but we did not have a clear multicultural education focus. It has only been during the past two years that we have made a more concerted effort to introduce multicultural issues that our students will have to deal with in their primarily elementary classrooms.

The students in our teacher education program are racially homogeneous, with only a few minority students. For the most part, our students come from small towns or rural areas where the primary occupations have been either farming or mining; a few are from much larger urban or suburban locales in the state. Even though our campus includes a large number of international students, few of those students are enrolled in the teacher education program. Therefore, while the socioeconomic backgrounds of our students are varied and their age range is fairly wide, they are a generally homogeneous group in terms of gender, ethnic, and racial makeup.

## Tools for Learning

Two vehicles have served us well in teaching and learning about multiculturalism—reflective writing and literature. First, our students do a fair amount of writing in and out of class. They not only summarize what they read but also spend a good deal of time reacting to their reading. Those written reactions are an attempt to connect their previous experiences with the present concepts being studied. The students explore where they are, their perspective, and their stance with regard to a given concept or theme. It is through reflective writing assignments related to multicultural education that we help our students enlarge their cultural life space to include awareness and acceptance of self and others.

The second vehicle used to move students beyond their present stance is literature. Because literature allows a reader to get lost in a story or situation, because it can provide some distance for considering cultures other than one's own, and because literature speaks to the heart as well as to the mind, it is a pertinent choice and opportune vehicle for instruction related to multicultural education. Our students are encouraged to become very familiar with the authors and illustrators of multicultural literature, with stories having a common bond, and with stories that deal with concepts overarching the human condition among cultures.

There is much support for using multicultural literature to achieve our goals. Bishop (1992) writes that "multicultural literature is one of the most powerful components of a multicultural education curriculum, the underlying purpose of which is to help make the society a more equitable one" (p. 40). Perkins and Long (1991) call literature "a powerful tool for affirming the experiences of one's own culture" and helping "children understand and appreciate the culture of others" (p. 51). Reading is an active process and by reading and interacting with multicultural literature we are changed. "It is this capacity to change us, to change our perspective on the world, that make's literature a vehicle for understanding cultures and experiences different from our own" (Bishop, 1987, p. 66).

## Methods for Infusion

During our undergraduate reading methods course, we teach a four-week literature component designed to address the value of using literature in the classroom. On the first day, we introduce various genres and formats that make up the world of children's literature by giving groups of five or six students an assortment of books. They are asked to look through the books and list the different categories that they find represented. Their lists have always included examples such as board books, picture books, and historical fiction, and now, because of the books we share with them, they are adding another category: books about different cultures.

Our means for infusing a multicultural focus throughout the course have included (1) reading aloud at each class meeting a piece of children's literature that is representative of a variety of cultures and genres and discussing that literature following the read-aloud session, (2) demonstrating Norton's (1990) five-phase model for studying multicultural literature supported by Bank's (1989) hierarchy of curriculum models, (3) using multicultural literature as examples during group activities that demonstrate ways to use literature in the classroom, and (4) direct instruction of multicultural issues pertaining to reading during the four-week literature component.

## Reading Aloud and Discussion

Reading aloud children's books is a natural element of our course, in large part because of the finding highlighted in *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission of Reading* that "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children" (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, p. 23). We make it a practice to read at each class meeting because we want to model both how strongly we feel about the role of literature in the classroom as well as the techniques necessary to read well for an audience.

The discussion that follows each read-aloud session is especially important. Learning is social, and being able to respond and think about books out loud provides a greater chance for the books to be internalized. It is during discussions that we have the opportunity to enhance our students' knowledge about different cultures "to encourage less-biased ideas…to confront and discuss prejudices, to stimulate imagination and critical thinking, as well as to strengthen self-esteem" (Nickolai-Mays & Oulahan, 1991, p. 23).

Before reading we set a purpose for our students. Sometimes we ask them to think about how and with whom they would use the book; other times we just ask them to listen and enjoy. After reading we discuss the thoughts and/or concerns they have. We vary our purposes for reading, but we rarely ask the listeners to take an efferent stance, where they are just listening for information (Rosenblatt, 1990). We try to give them the opportunity to feel the stories, taking an aesthetic stance, before we use the books as a medium for multicultural education.

Using literature as a bridge to implement multicultural education in our classroom sometimes results in the presentation of taboo images or topics. One challenge has been to analyze the literature we plan to read aloud to our students for cultural images and depictions that could be perceived as negative or derogatory. Taboo images and topics are often conveyed in illustrations and language used in literature, so being aware of the author's and illustrator's choices becomes very important. In an author's note in *Flossie and the Fox*, Patricia McKissack (1986) writes that her grandfather "was a master storyteller who charmed his audience with humorous stories told in the rich and colorful dialect of the rural South," the language she chooses for retelling this story. Risking the possibility of having their language choices dubbed taboo, McKissack and other authors elect to incorporate culturally specific language because of its potential to capture most effectively the reality and essence needed in their stories.

It is essential that educators not exclude these kinds of stories, because when more than cursory treatment of the literature is achieved, the taboo designation is rejected and a more favorable designation can be adapted. Bishop's (1987) suggestion to teachers who are concerned that "their attempts to read a story in a low prestige dialect will be seen as insulting or even racist" is to get "a bit of practice with a tape recorder" and make "a conscious effort not to compound the colloquialisms presented in the stories with an affected Southern accent" (p. 64).

Although contemporary assessments of black dialect often characterize the dialect as a derogatory portrayal of the culture, it has been suggested that it was previously used as a means of transmitting culture and encoding messages within the culture. With this in mind, perhaps, the dialect employed by slaves proved to be valuable as a means of communicating even while they were in the presence of the slave masters who were unable to decode the messages. Actually, their oppressors were probably oblivious to the fact that covert messages were being communicated right under their very noses.

Making our students aware of the positive origins and purposes for black dialect before we read *Flossie and the Fox* aloud led to their understanding that this dialect was indicative of an intelligence prevalent in a culture that, under the most trying circumstances, persevered and ultimately excelled. When Flossie Finley is tricking the "ol' slickster fox," our students were able to appreciate her genius in handling the situation. It was apparent in the discussions that followed that our students gained a more empathic understanding of the story, which might have been blocked had they perceived a negative use of dialect.

Our students recognized that although the story is told in black dialect, it could have been told just as realistically using other cultural or regional dialects without compromising its effectiveness. They also noted that the little girl in the story could have been a child from another cultural background and that this story has overt similarities with versions of the Little Red Riding

Hood tale from other cultures. Perhaps the students' acknowledgment of cultural similarities as well as differences lends credence to the belief that a primary benefit of multicultural education is that it serves to unify, not divide, cultures; it should enlighten us to our likenesses rather than our differences. Indeed, students' reactions indicate that the literature was a bridge to achieving greater cultural understanding and that experiencing the literature made them aware of its relevance for multicultural education. They also expressed their intent to include such literature in their own teaching. Surely these are the results that teacher educators should hope for.

### Demonstrating Norton's Five-Phase Model

To illustrate a classroom plan for in-depth inclusion of multicultural education in our reading methods course, we focus on Norton's (1990) five-phase model for studying multicultural literature. We share an article by Rasinski and Padak (1990) that introduces Bank's (1989) hierarchy of curricular models and that illustrates plans for "integrating ethnic/multicultural content into regular curricula" (Rasinski & Padak, 1990, p. 577). Bank's hierarchy encompasses, in order from the lowest to the highest level, a *contributions approach*, an *additive approach*, a *transformation approach*, and a *decision-making and social action approach*.

While the two lower levels of the hierarchy are relatively easy to plan and implement, they can contribute to a stereotyping and diminishing of the substantive contributions of an ethnic culture. Unfortunately, there are many children who believe all native Americans wear moccasins, live in tepees, and make baskets. If we are to help students understand other cultures, we cannot be satisfied with only sharing stereotypical components of a culture. By adding information about other cultures only as opportunities present themselves, we risk sending children the message that these cultures are only marginally worthy. For example, presenting stories about native Americans only at Thanksgiving instead of weaving cultural information throughout the entire curriculum tends to marginalize native Americans. The latter two levels of the hierarchy can be more problematic to implement, but they provide students with opportunities to extend their perspectives and challenge previously held biases.

Using examples from literature, we discuss Phase I, which "begins with a broad awareness of folktales, fables, myths, and legends from one cultural group" (Norton, 1990, p. 30). Instead of reading aloud on this day, we tell a story, choosing a folktale that has been "handed down for many generations" to demonstrate "the importance of the oral tradition in transmitting the beliefs and values of the people" (p. 32).

Following the guidelines in Phase II of the model, we narrow our focus to the folklore "of one or two tribal or cultural areas" (Norton, 1990, p. 30). Norton's article is an excellent resource for finding books that will be applicable to Phase II. Again, we divide our class into small groups and give each group books representative of a cultural group. Examples include "Native American myths and legends from the Plains Indians or Indians of the Southwestern pueblos; black folktales from the Southern United States; or Hispanic, Mayan, or Aztec folktales and legends from Central America, Mexico, or the Southwestern United States" (p. 30). In their groups, students "identify the philosophy, values, and beliefs of the specific people reflected in the folklore" (p. 33) as they share the books we have given them. By learning about the central values of a culture and the relationship of those values to the daily lives of its people, students are better able to understand the essence of that culture (Musser & Freeman, 1989).

For Phase III we show our class examples of "historical informational books, biographies, and autobiographies" and discuss the importance of guiding students to evaluate such sources for authenticity and to "identify the historical happenings that influenced the culture" (Norton, 1990, p. 34). Students recognize the possibility of thematic units and a more integrated curriculum when they see literature that will support instruction in other curriculum areas.

The informational books of Phase III build the background knowledge necessary to help readers evaluate the historical fiction of Phase IV. LeSourd (1988) writes that readers can have difficulty with passages about a culture for which they have little knowledge; it is possible that they will distort a culturally unfamiliar text and modify it to fit with their own cultural values and beliefs. It is less likely that students will make these distortions if they use background knowledge from a variety of sources to evaluate "historical fiction according to authenticity of setting, credibility of conflict, believability of characterization, authenticity of traditional beliefs expressed by the characters, and appropriateness of themes and author's style" (Norton, 1990, p. 34).

Finally, in Phase V, students read contemporary poetry, realistic fiction, and biography by authors of outstanding multicultural literature. During this phase, as students make connections to all they have learned about a culture, they come to understand that, among the world's many cultures, people exhibit similarities as well as differences.

### Practice with Literacy Strategies

During the class meetings that follow, we discuss various articles related to instructional methods for using literature in the classroom, and we follow with opportunities for students to participate in activities that give them experience with the various methods. For example, after a discussion of Keegan and Shrake's (1991) article, "Using Literature Study Groups," we share novels such as *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990), *Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey* (Highwater, 1977), and *Cousins* (Hamilton, 1990). Our students choose from five or six designated novels the one that they wish to read, and they become members of literature study groups that meet briefly during several class periods to talk about their books.

Reading independently after discussing Gambrell's (1983) article, "Getting Started with Sustained Silent Reading and Keeping It Going," is one of the most popular instructional methods that we demonstrate. After we share brief descriptions of multicultural picture books, our students select the ones they wish to read. After reading silently, students meet with two or three other students who have read the same book to create open-ended questions that they may use some day to help their own students reach deeper levels of understanding of the themes of their particular books.

We model instructional strategies for literature use and provide opportunities for practice because we believe such experiences impress upon our students the value of literature-based instruction. Many of our students report that they do not see the use of literature modeled when they observe in classrooms in the field. As more of our students graduate and find teaching positions, we expect to see a difference in area classrooms.

### Direct Instruction of Multicultural Issues

Many topics related to multicultural issues that we are interested in introducing arise in the natural course of discussing children's books. However, topics that are not raised in discussion are dealt with directly. Being able to analyze textbooks and storybooks for cultural bias is especially important for teachers, so we have developed a plan of instruction for this skill. Using copies of older basal readers and readers published in the last year or two, groups of students check the texts to decide whether or not the materials are inclusive and balanced in their content, illustrations, and perspectives. The students use a checklist (see Appendix) to analyze their texts and report their findings to the class. This activity has been particularly effective, and our students have internalized and used this knowledge by looking more closely at the children's literature to which they are exposed in coursework and in the field.

While we are not able to deal with all the issues of multicultural education in a reading methods course, we can identify those that pertain most saliently to reading and the language arts. As teacher educators, we must prepare our preservice teachers to meet the needs of children in culturally diverse settings and to foster cultural awareness, understanding, and appreciation of all. The lives of all the children in the classrooms of our nation will improve only when teachers have respect for the cultural identity of individuals and the pedagogical knowledge to help all achieve to the best of their ability.

## APPENDIX

### Analysis of Instructional Materials for Bias

It is essential for all teachers to be able to conduct a thorough analysis of instructional materials to ensure that the materials are inclusive and balanced in their content, illustrations, and perspectives. In their *Guidelines for selecting bias-free textbooks and storybooks*, the Council on Interracial Books for Children (1980) recommends that particular attention be given to the following areas:

1. Illustration—Check for depiction of stereotypes, tokenism, and limiting stereotypical role designations.
2. Story line—Evaluate the "standard for success," how problems are resolved, and who is depicted in lead/supporting roles.
3. Lifestyles—Are minorities typically depicted in low socioeconomic lifestyles? Are native Americans referred to as "Indians" and are they always in costume?
4. Relationships between people—Who is most often depicted in leadership roles? Subservient roles?
5. Heroes/Heroines—Are all heroes male? If females are depicted as heroines, what are the criteria for their being granted hero status? Must the females achieve goals/feats that are traditionally viewed as male accomplishments?
6. Effects on learners' perceptions—Are limiting norms perpetuated? Are there positive images for all children? Are only "perfect" images depicted?
7. Author's and/or illustrator's background—What is the author's/illustrator's previous work/publications? What qualifies the author/illustrator to deal with the literature topic?
8. Author's perspective—Is the author's perspective a limited one.... Eurocentric, egocentric, Afrocentric?
9. Loaded words—Be particularly alert to inclusion of words and images that are culturally degrading and inaccurate.
10. Copyright date—The time period during which instructional materials were prepared can be an indicator of the perspectives and content that is included/excluded/distorted in the materials.

Analysis of instructional materials should include, though not be limited to, these areas. Because much of the learning that students are involved in is derived from instructional materials, teachers must give careful consideration to the content of the materials and whether that content is accurately inclusive of the multiple cultures in this nation. When such consideration is given, teachers can then attempt to integrate their curriculum and instruction effectively.

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# Reflective Practice Confronts the Complexities of Teaching Reading

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In the current focus of reflective teaching, the image of the teacher is one who researches and reflects on classroom learning. In this reflective environment, the students rather than the curriculum are at the center of teachers' thinking; when students do not learn, teachers respond by examining their instruction. The changes that are effected by this reflective teaching utilize both intuitive and complex thinking. Teachers acquire and refine their understanding of teaching by reflecting on action (Schon, 1988), which occurs after the event when full attention can be given to analyzing and planning. This involves stepping away from the situation and taking oneself back through all that transpired. The more reflection-on-action is practiced, the more adept one becomes at reflection-in-action, where adjustments are made while teaching (Kottkamp, 1990). Data are accumulated on the spot, and change in instruction and thinking is immediate.

Listening to our own "back talk" either during or after instruction leads to refining our theoretical understanding of how children learn. As we reflect on an instructional event, we reframe a problem, identifying the particulars of the situation that need attention and those that will be ignored by "mentally experimenting and manipulating contextual factors, generating alternative hypotheses about how the problem might be resolved and mentally testing the alternative hypotheses" (Nolan & Huber, 1989, p. 127). According to Kitchener and King (1981), mature reflective judgment involves the ability to view situations from multiple perspectives, searching alternative explanations and using supporting evidence for evaluating a decision or position. In fact, Kitchener and King have outlined a sequence of increasingly complex assumptions about knowledge as related to forms of justification. These seven levels explain how individuals approach problem solving and how they view instructional situations. During the initial stages, the only problems that are acknowledged are those with an absolute solution, which are termed well-structured problems. However, during later stages, the complex relationships in problem situations and the ill-structured nature of problems are acknowledged. These later stages commonly occur during the undergraduate years and are typical of preservice teachers' thinking (Kitchener & King, 1990).

The experience of struggling with problems that are not easily "set," the ill-structured problems that have unclear parameters, can serve to awaken reflective thinking and promote inquiry. Preservice teachers who work with problem readers often confront these ill-structured situations and, as a result, experience both the confusion and the satisfaction of wondering, searching, and discovering. In this reflective process, the first step is accurately "setting" the problem. The shift from problem solving to "problem setting" is crucial; if the problems are not critically identified and understood, the proposed solutions will be less than adequate. Thus, when practitioners set a problem, they "choose and name the things they will notice" (Schon, 1988, p. 4).

Teacher education programs attempting to promote reflectivity need to include field experiences that present uncertain, unique, and conflicting situations where prospective teachers can think and act like teachers (Schon, 1988). Certainly, a reading clinic that combines a tutoring experience with the university classroom can introduce the concepts of reflectivity at a level where they can take root. Because of the unpredictability with which problem readers approach the reading task, this particular field experience provides an optimum setting for preservice teachers to state uncertainties, explore puzzlements, and deal with the complexities of teaching.

Complexity in teaching reading has been defined in several ways. In a series of studies employing an "ordered semantic tree technique," complexity in understanding reading instruction was defined as the number of content words used in constructing a "tree," the number of chunks of related words, and the relationships drawn among the words (Duffy & Roehler, 1986; Roehler, 1986; Roehler, Duffy, Hermann, Conley, & Johnson, 1988). Drawing on these studies as well as the work of Kitchener and King (1981, 1990), complexity can be defined as the ability to show connections between the statements that deal with the conditions of instruction and reader behaviors. Previous research by Walker (1991) has shown that preservice teachers in a reading clinic setting do reflect on both the reader behaviors and the conditions of instruction such as the text, task, or reader. According to Kitchener and King (1990), mature reflective judgment is based in viewing a situation from multiple perspectives, that is, seeing several aspects of a setting at once, contextualizing the problem using a type of "if/then" thinking, and interpreting the evidence of this thinking from either a single context or across contexts.

These notions, along with studies of preservice teacher education curricula that underscore the persistent lack of connections among theoretical knowledge presented in courses and dilemmas of classroom practice (Kagan, 1992), led us to look more closely at the development of reflectivity. Our focus on reflective statements led us to formulate the following questions: (1) How do preservice teachers "set" problems when teaching problem readers? and (2) Do preservice teachers make reflective statements that show the complex relationship among competing variables when teaching?

## METHOD

### Participants and Procedures

Twenty-five preservice teachers participated in this study. Participants were senior elementary education majors who attended a seminar and field experience simultaneously. Using an ethnographic research stance, the researchers were participant-observers in an after-school university reading clinic where each preservice teacher was assigned to teach one student who had been referred by parents because of concerns in classroom reading performance. The clinic was in session for two hours each week for eight weeks.

Preservice teachers completed diagnostic narratives which included four aspects: plans, rationales for plans, observations during instruction, and reflections after instruction (Walker, 1990). Although the entire diagnostic narrative was evaluated as part of the course grade, the reflections accounted for only 1 percent of that grade. Preservice teachers were informed that reflections were important in meeting their students' instructional needs but not a key element in receiving a course grade. After the preservice teachers implemented their plans, they recorded their reflections on the diagnostic narratives. The researchers observed and informally interviewed participants, and literacy artifacts were collected to support the reflective statements that the preservice teachers made.

### Data Collection and Analysis

Data sources included the diagnostic narratives, field notes from direct observations, and literacy artifacts. All diagnostic narratives were screened, and six were selected for further analysis. The reflective statements in these diagnostic narratives were supported by two other sources: artifacts, such as informal assessments and plans, and field notes. Reflections were segmented into idea units. For example, "I used the book *Little Monster at School* even though it was a harder and longer book" was coded as one statement dealing with the text.

After the reflections were divided into idea units, they were categorized according to the 10 categories established by Walker (1991; see Table). These statements were then analyzed to determine the percent of statements in each category. Finally, the statements were reread to determine how they were related to each other and, more specifically, to determine if the preservice teachers wrote about the relationships among the conditions of instruction as they thought about their instruction. Using analytic induction (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984), related statements were noted. Once the statements were categorized and connections noted, a second rater identified categories and connections within the narratives. Differences were resolved by discussions until agreement was reached.

## RESULTS

### Problem Setting

The participants made statements in all of the 10 categories. The percentage for each category, averaged across participants, appears in the table. Although participants included statements about management and personal concerns, they included more statements about the conditions of instruction (45%), which included statements about the task, the text, the technique, scaffolding, and situational statements. These types of statements represented either an adjustment or a description of that instructional condition. For example, "I will continue to use Language Experience instead of a storybook" was classified as a technique statement because it described a decision to continue with a technique that was working. The preservice teachers also discussed their students' reading behaviors (35%) in terms of strategy deployment or reader performance and reader affect (15%). The majority of the statements (95%) dealt with either the conditions of instruction or the readers' response to instruction, such as students' reading behaviors or affective responses to an instructional condition.

### Making Connections

Participants made connections among the conditions of instruction and their readers' behaviors. For example, participant DM reflected on the relationship between her student's affect and the scaffolds she used by saying, "I used the

**TABLE**
**Percent of Reflective Statements in Each Category**

| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| Management | 2 |
| Reader affect | 15 |
| Personal concerns | 3 |
| Reader strategy deployment | 12 |
| Reader performance | 23 |
| Task | 15 |
| Text | 10 |
| Scaffolding | 4 |
| Technique | 13 |
| Situational | 3 |

impress method [technique statement]. We predicted, read and discussed three books together [task statement]. She seems a lot more confident in her reading [reader affect] when I am reading with her [scaffold statement]." This preservice teacher used assisted reading along with predictions and discussion to enhance the student's reading and concept of self as a reader. As the preservice teacher was reflecting on the interrelationships among the several aspects of instruction, she was setting the problem in a more complex way than she had discussed it previously. For instance, only three days before she had simply said, "We predicted, read, and talked about a story." This reflection is a simple reflective statement that describes what was done but does not draw relationships between the various aspects of the instructional event. Of the 396 statements analyzed for the study, 170 were connected and the others were simple descriptions of the instructional setting.

The simple descriptions contribute to setting the problem, but they do not reveal the interrelationship among aspects of the setting. It is this reflection on interrelationships that depicts the complexity of teaching reading. For example, participant GN stated:

> I am decreasing my frequency of interruptions during reading [scaffold statement]. He has been consistent about calling on what he has already read and his own knowledge to make predictions [strategy deployment]. I don't find frequent interruptions to be helping him, they more likely break up the flow of the story. For the next few sessions, I will use interruptions once or perhaps twice [task statement] depending on the length of the story [text statement] during reading. I don't want to give it up entirely because I think that asking him questions once during reading [task statement] will help to keep him focused on the meaning of the story [strategy deployment]. It will also help me make sure he is focusing on meaning, as well as print.

In this example, participant GN is rethinking her instructional decisions, tying together several aspects of instruction and the reader's performance to construct a rationale for her decision to change a previously successful instructional intervention. Through her observations, she has realized that an instructional adjustment might move the student to more independent reading. This more complex thinking, however, appeared infrequently in the reflections. Of the 396 statements, 85 were connected to each other and another 85 showed connections among three or more statements.

## DISCUSSION

In developing reflective thought, a critical aspect is the ability to "set" the problem by identifying the critical aspects of the learning situation that reveal the complexity of teaching. The use of the categories of reflective thought enabled us to look more closely at what aspects of instruction the preservice teachers contemplated. The fact that these preservice teachers were able to reflect on the conditions of instruction in the majority of their reflective statements means they were involved in thinking about "setting" the problem. The conditions of instruction (e.g., task, text) have been identified as critical aspects of the instructional situation (Pearson & Valencia, 1987). In fact, these preservice teachers' statements indicated they were more concerned with the impact of instruction than findings of previous research (e.g., Brophy, 1984) might predict.

After categorizing the statements, we were able to identify where the preservice teachers established relationships among the critical aspects of instruction. They reflected upon the interrelationships of the conditions of instruction and their students' reading behaviors at some point during the course. These connected statements described the interrelationship among instructional conditions and reader behaviors, demonstrating a beginning in their understanding of the complexity of teaching.

Although teacher educators believe that learning occurs as teachers reflect on their instruction, many continue to lecture in a didactic format and provide field experiences without support for reflective practice. When reflection and field experiences were an integral part of university instruction, students had an opportunity to practice reflecting-on-action and sharing their reflections with classmates. These reflections indicated a grappling with the complexities in teaching.

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# Value-Added Benefits for Reforming a Remedial Reading Methodology Course with Videodisc and Hypercard Technology

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At Vanderbilt University, we are involved in a project, partially funded by the Sears-Roebuck Foundation (Risko, 1989), evaluating the use of videodisc-based cases and supporting technology to enhance an undergraduate remedial reading methodology course. This course is required for students majoring in elementary and special education and is taken during the students' junior or senior year. Using the videodisc technology, shared learning experiences for the students and professor are situated in problem-solving environments that encourage students to analyze authentic problems and case information from multiple perspectives.

During the past three years, we have developed the cases on videodisc and examined their effects on the participation of the students and instructor during class discussions and on the students' use of content knowledge (Risko, 1991, 1992; Risko, Yount, & Towell, 1991; Risko, Yount, & McAllister, 1992). In the process, we have learned about several issues relevant to the use of technology to create problem-solving contexts for undergraduate education. Many of these issues have come from colleagues who are interested in implementing similar instruction in their teacher education programs. Our goal in this article is to examine these issues as they relate to our three years of experience.

Our discussion is divided into two major sections. In this first section, we discuss theories influencing our methodology, a rationale for course revisions, and the process for both developing and using our technology. In the second section, we address questions that we and others have generated and that have influenced our thinking.

## DESIGNING, DEVELOPING, AND USING VIDEODISC-BASED CASES

### Theoretical Support and Rationale

The design for the cases used in this project was influenced by previous and on-going projects at Vanderbilt's Learning Technology Center and the Department of Teaching and Learning. Each of these projects (e.g., CTGV, 1992a, 1992b; Kinzer & Risko, 1986; Risko with CTGV, 1990, 1992a, 1992b; Risko & Kinzer, 1989; Risko, Kinzer, Vye, & Rowe, 1990) involves anchoring or situating instruction in the context of information-rich videodisc environments that invite students and teachers to explore and solve complex problems. One of the projects, *Young Sherlock*, focuses primarily on literacy development with links to social studies and science. The second project, the *Jasper Woodbury Problem-Solving Series*, focuses primarily on math and science learning with links to social studies and literature.

The instructional approach across both of these projects is referred to as "anchored instruction" (Bransford, Vye, Kinzer, & Risko, 1990; Risko with CTGV, 1990, 1992a, 1992b) and is characterized by involving students in sustained thinking about complex and authentic problems *and* students' spontaneous use of information in new contexts. (See Risko with CTGV, 1990; Risko, 1991). Anchored instruction provides several problems simultaneously, representing real-world events that invite close inspection of embedded information. Teacher-mediated learning activities enable students to understand problems that experts encounter and to learn how to use knowledge (e.g., prior experiences, related text information) as a tool for problem solving. Research has indicated that learning in these problem-solving contexts allows students to acquire information *and* to understand when it is useful to know and apply this information (Bransford, Sherwood, & Hasselbring, 1988; Bransford, Kinzer, Risko, Rowe, & Vye, 1989; Risko with CTGV, 1992a, 1992b; Risko, & Kinzer, 1989; Risko, Kinzer, Vye, & Rowe, 1990).

Case methodology as developed in professional schools, such as medicine, business, and law, also influenced our efforts to generate cases. Case methodology is described by Christensen (1987) and Learned (1987) as a process-oriented approach that encourages problem formulation and problem solving—active learning that occurs during the process of defining and resolving authentic problems. This notion of case-based instruction is compatible with the goals of anchored instruction and with our intent to revise our remedial reading methodology course.

Major goals for developing cases on videodisc were to provide a rich base of information and to encourage undergraduates to notice characteristics of problem situations so that they could acquire the contextual and situational knowledge needed for applying what they know about assessment and instruction in new settings. These videodisc cases can't substitute for the vital learning that occurs during actual teaching experiences, but they can greatly enrich preteaching experiences.

Principles of anchored instruction were coupled with principles of case methodology for designing the three cases recorded on videodisc and enhanced by hypercard and microcomputer technology to revise the remedial reading course. These three cases represent a "critical mass" (Spiro, Vispoel, Schmitz, Samarapungavan, & Boerger, 1987) of information. Each case is embedded with multiple examples and sources of authentic classroom problems, and students examine the cases within mediated and shared learning contexts—contexts in which they are coached and supported while assuming different points of view and are invited to pursue and generate questions about relevant information. The problems presented in the cases are as complex as the problems the undergraduates will eventually face in classrooms when they are teaching.

### Process for Developing Cases on Videodisc

Several procedures were followed for developing these three cases. First, two teachers with a history of successful remedial instruction were selected and videotaped. Entire lessons were videotaped during six to eight weeks of instruction. Using the editing room at Vanderbilt's Learning Technology Center, the first author edited and condensed hours of videotaped segments for the production of three 30-minute master tapes. These master tapes were then sent to a video production company that pressed them onto three corresponding videodiscs. Each case tells a coherent story about a student experiencing reading difficulties using various forms of naturally occurring instructional events. Our current thinking supports the importance of using a narrative structure for developing such cases. Rather than presenting case information in a series of disconnected video scenes, this information is embedded in a story that invites interest and creates a need for responding to the story problems.

Second, hypercard technology was developed to enhance the effectiveness of instruction. The hypercard software (used on Macintosh computers) allows access to scenes on the videodisc and to a wide array of text information (that was word processed into the hypercard software) for a more elaborate and in-depth study of each case.

### Use of Cases in Methodology Course

The class structure of our course changed from a mostly lecture format to one in which the undergraduates participate in an analysis of problems displayed in the video cases. Initially, the cases are viewed as a whole-class activity. The video is displayed on a monitor and scenes are accessed via the computer by the instructor or a student. The course begins with a video introduction to Emma, the first case. The undergraduates first observe Emma in the Chapter 1 classroom participating in a guided reading lesson. They are encouraged to describe what they notice about instruction. After this introduction to Emma in the classroom, students are often interested in knowing more about Emma, which leads to the observation and analysis of Emma's performance across multiple formal and informal measures (e.g., teacher-student conferences and interviews, oral reading assessment on standardized and informal tests, participation during reading and writing activities). This analysis leads to a more extended examination of Emma's instruction and viewing the video for different reasons to analyze factors such as Emma's participation, the teacher's purpose, the teacher's questioning patterns, and so on.

Much discussion occurs, and the undergraduates generate information such as *student-specific content* (e.g., information about Emma's interests, prior knowledge, abilities, use of strategies, and instructional needs), *contextual information* (e.g., nature of instruction, reactions to assessment tools), *procedural information* (e.g., techniques and strategies implemented in the classroom), and *text characteristics*. Case information is presented in stages for the purpose of encouraging analysis, reflection, and problem solving. Since cases do not contain resolutions, the content can be studied for different reasons, including many generated by the students.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT

In the following section of this paper, we identify and address questions influencing our current thinking about our project.

### What Equipment and Related Costs Are Required for This Project?

In the classroom, a laser videodisc player is connected to a 25-inch color monitor to display the video for an entire class (25 to 30 students). As noted earlier, access to specific scenes on the videodisc is controlled by a computer. The hypercard software allows us to interface the disc player with a Macintosh LC II computer. We also use two optional pieces of equipment to facilitate our use of the equipment. First, we use a transportation cart to move equipment from one classroom to another and to keep the equipment organized for easy access. Second, a liquid crystal display (LCD) panel projects our hypercard text that is displayed on the computer monitor to our audience. The LCD panel connects directly to the computer and lays on an overhead transparency projector.

Because equipment costs are changing yearly, we provide only an estimate of current costs for the main equipment we are using. The total cost is approximately $4,700, which corresponds to $800 for a laser-videodisc player, $1,800 for a MacIntosh LC II computer, $700 for a 25-inch color monitor, $1,200 for an LCD panel, and $200 for the equipment cart.

### How Are Videodiscs Produced?

Since we developed our own cases on videodisc, we incurred additional production and editing costs. We understand fully that it is not practical or necessary for faculty at every school to produce their own laser videodiscs. Our current interaction with publishers and colleagues at other institutions suggests that educationally related videodiscs will be available and affordable within the next several years.

We use several types of equipment to develop our videodiscs. Two video cameras in the classroom, with one camera focusing on the students and the second camera focusing on the teacher, provide a comprehensive view of the classroom. We use super VHS cameras and film because they provide higher visual quality than standard VHS videotape.

The estimated cost of this equipment used for videotaping is approximately $3,000, which corresponds to these amounts per item: $1,200 for each super VHS camera, $100 for each tripod, $20 to $200 for each microphone, $6 for each videotape, and $10 for each headphone.

We used a second set of equipment, housed in our Learning Technology Center, to edit our tapes. Initially, we used a super VHS recorder to view our videotapes. Two 14-inch color monitors allowed us to view the entire videotape on one monitor and examine segments that have been edited onto professional 3/4 inch videotape on the other. It is this tape that is eventually sent out to be processed into a laser videodisc. All edits are performed at a multimedia control unit that has the capability to edit visual and sound tracks and to adjust characteristics such as hue, tone, resolution, and chronology individually or in concert with each other.

It is most difficult to estimate the cost of an editing room due to the variety and quality of the equipment that one may use in the editing process. It is safe to say that the price can vary from $20,000 to $100,000.

The final step in making a laser videodisc is sending the 3/4-inch 30-minute tape to a professional studio to be pressed onto a videodisc. The cost for this is approximately $350 per disc.

### How Does This Methodology Benefit Instruction and Learning?

For the last three years, we have examined the teaching and learning taking place in our college classrooms. Our videodisc cases are designed to encourage generative learning activities that are emphasized by constructivist approaches to learning (Risko with CTGV, 1990; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1991). As we indicted in an earlier paper, students are actively engaged in the discussions of our cases as they generate and confirm hunches, examine case information in depth, and mediate each others' learning (Risko, Yount, & McAllister, 1992).

Currently, we are analyzing multiple sources of data (i.e., transcriptions of class discussions across semesters, journal entries generated by our students corresponding to class sessions, lesson plans, and participation in the practicum) to examine the impact of our methodology on students' performance. Across these data sets, we continue to notice the active involvement of our undergraduates as they refine their understanding of how to respond to classroom problems and how to apply what they are learning about assessment and instruction. We notice that our students are developing an ability to use appropriate assessment and instructional methods with particular children. Our students see children and teachers react in different ways to these methods and discuss ways of responding to these situations. By generating ideas and making hypotheses, they begin to think like effective teachers and approach problems more confidently.

We present three forms of data to illustrate our students' thinking and level of participation. First, a segment from one class discussion reveals some dimensions of student participation. Video cases are not presented as perfect teaching models but as realistic examples that cause our students to become very interested and involved in analyzing them. Our students often build on each other's comments and engage in higher-order thinking.

The following is a segment from one class discussion. The students are analyzing a previewing activity involving Emily. (Within this excerpt, "D" refers to the instructor and a different letter codes each student.)

**D:** They were obviously previewing. What did you think?

**T:** Her vocabulary is amazing.

**D:** What did you think about that as a preview activity?

**J:** It was bringing in her own experiences.

**D:** They seem to be activating schema. What did you think about the way she was getting to the word *fad*?

**K:** I agree with Jenny.

**S:** For Emily this doesn't work as well as I've seen it work. With Emily—asking her what was her favorite fad and trying to put her at the center of it would have worked.

**C:** It would also have helped build her self-esteem.

**S:** I just feel like she has a bird's eye view of the school and no one likes her.

**D:** It has been mentioned that she's not well liked but things are improving.

**E:** It seems like a good act, but I think it was too easy for her. She needs to be challenged.

**D:** That could be true because *fad* was obviously not new to her. But Joann may not have known that.

**L:** Her answer was so awesome. I couldn't have explained it so well, so for Joann to then talk about kinds of fads was sort of lower- level thinking. Emily could have led the discussion then.

This excerpt from our class transcriptions helps us to elaborate on the thinking being displayed by the instructor and students. First, the instructor focuses the discussion on the previewing activity. "J", "K", and "S" recognize the purpose of the activity (i.e., to activate schema) but quickly move to higher levels of thinking by analyzing Emily's participation in this preview activity. Several students indicate that this particular use of previewing is not appropriate for Emily and share their concern about Emily's self-esteem. The instructor moderates the discussion (e.g., "that could be true") and mediates the exchange by reminding the students of relevant case information (i.e., "it has been mentioned that..."). "L" recognizes Emily's "awesome" language capabilities. She suggests that this particular context is not appropriate for Emily and recommends an alternate way for involving Emily in the prereading discussion. We believe such an exchange illustrates how our students are building flexible thinking as they shift their responses from declarative or factual information to responses revealing that they are using what they know about Emily and the instructional strategies to determine conditions or contexts in which they may use this information.

Second, journal entries provide information about our students' reactions to their readings and to events. These particular journal entries correspond to our discussion of miscue analysis. During the days of this discussion, we used the videodisc for quick and easy access to related scenes. We returned to segments on the disc for the purpose of analyzing Emma's performance, observing her "body language" and gestures, listening to her intonation and inflections, and examining the nature of interactions between Emma and her teacher. Our analysis of the corresponding journal entries reveals reactions to the procedure of a miscue analysis and an analysis of factors contributing to its success. Several students indicated that the video helped them to clarify procedures and a purpose for miscue analysis. These students stated that even through this procedure had been described in previous courses, they felt that it was too complicated and not usable for a teacher. After examining Emma's reading from a miscue perspective, students said that they now understood its purpose and realistic use in the classroom. One student elaborated on this point in her journal by stating that "the video case study helped and changed my understanding of miscue analysis... was able to see a technique put into real life use. I could have read about it until I was blue in the face, but the video actually demonstrated the miscue analysis."

Additional comments in the journals suggest that our students' thinking went far beyond a study of the purpose and procedures for miscue analysis. For example, one student underscored the importance of the oral reading data. She indicated that these data helped her to better understand the problems Emma was experiencing and helped her to understand why Emma made certain responses during instruction and shared reading opportunities. One student noted how important it is to be aware of the "visual dimension" such as Emma's movements, gestures, and so on to "enhance understanding of a reader's miscues." Another student analyzed the miscue event from the teacher perspective indicating "how hard it is to make the assessment situation a natural one." Several students examined this event from a classroom context perspective as they noted distractions occurring in the room during the time the teacher was collecting the oral reading sample. One student indicated that this observation would enhance her planning for a similar assessment activity. She wrote that "methods work differently when in use and not just described." This range of journal entries illustrates our students' selective use of appropriate and contextually relevant information for responding to problems that they formulate. Learning situated in these cases enables our students to use their knowledge as a tool for problem generation and problem solving.

Third, observations and interviews provided information about the influence of our cases on lesson planning during the practicum. For example, many students referred to the Emma and Emily cases when they chose texts for their assessment and instruction. They recalled that the miscue passage for Emma was inappropriate because of the mismatch between text content and Emma's prior experiences. Conversely, they recalled Emily's active involvement in the "Ramona" stories, which appealed to her interests and sense of humor. Thinking to use case information to guide lesson planning is an important aspect of our methodology. Indicators of such use of information suggest that students are applying and generalizing what they know to novel and complex situations.

Taken together, the above examples suggest that our cases are impacting on our students' thinking and learning in important ways. These cases provide an example of a method for creating interesting, realistic contexts that encourage active construction and use of knowledge.

### How Does This Instruction Compare to Other Forms of Instruction Traditionally Used in a Remedial Reading Methodology Course?

Prior to revision, our remedial reading methodology course followed a lecture format that was extended through the use of written case studies, verbal descriptions presented by the instructor, and videos. We knew that a lecture format was inadequate for activating our students' participation and use of content to solve problems. We also noted that our use of written cases and video was less than optimal.

The traditional cases that we used oversimplified real-world, complex problems and provided both the problem *and* the solution. The use of such cases discouraged our students from taking an active role in decision making or from examining information from different perspectives that may lead to solutions different from the one presented by the author of the case (Risko, 1991). The linear narrow format of the cases discouraged our students from making multiple connections across the cases or noting comparison and contrasting information. In contrast, we note that our students involved in the video-based cases are constantly referring to information across the three target cases to help them understand case-specific information. We believe that such connections are necessary if students are going to learn conditions under which information can be used to solve problems.

We acknowledge, also, that our use of video has changed dramatically. Previously, we used video (e.g., a reading recovery lesson, a demonstration of repeated readings) as a means for illustrating points "told" during a lecture. Our analysis of class transcripts from such classes indicated that students' responses were limited in quantity and tended to focus on procedures or were generated to clarify information already presented by the instructor. In contrast, our video is used to situate the presentation of content—content that evolves as the story of the case develops.

### Is it Difficult to Use This Methodology?

The role of the instructor shifts from that of a lecturer or "expert" conveying information to that of a mediator or coach. This role has three requirements for the instructor. First, the instructor needs to be immersed in the range and depth of content available on the video and hypercard materials. The instructor prepares for each class, identifying goals for the class discussion and questions that will open and encourage continued dialogue. Because students often direct or modify the content of the group discussion, the instructor must be prepared to access alternative video and hypercard information to support the current discussion. Second, the instructor must be extremely familiar with case content so that he or she can mediate discussions by asking students to pursue ideas in more depth or to explore alternative viewpoints. Third, the instructor needs to know how to use the equipment. Prior to the first class session, we learned how to set up the equipment and how to access the various components of video and text. Even though we started with very little knowledge concerning computers and other technology, we quickly moved to a level of comfort after two or three class sessions with the equipment.

## CONCLUSION

Videodisc, hypercard, and computer technologies have been instrumental in reforming our remedial reading methodology course. This technology rests on the rich information base of concrete situations that are typical in the classroom. As undergraduate students view these classroom situations, they notice patterns or characteristics of problem situations. On a videodisc, they see the progression of events that characterize problem situations. The hypercard program provides a corresponding framework for organizing these features into problem and solution sets for reflection and discussion.

Our methodology requires both financial and time expenditures. The specific equipment that we use is somewhat costly. Certainly, faculty time is invested in learning how to use the equipment in an effective manner. Yet we believe the financial and time investments are worthwhile when considering the potential benefits of this methodology on students' learning.

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# First Steps in Teaching Reading: A Descriptive Study

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First experiences are impressionable moments; that is why we can remember first steps, first days in school, and first rides on bicycles. First experiences in learning new skills are also very impressionable times. This study explored first experiences in learning to teach reading and sought to understand the impressions made upon preservice teachers during this experience.

In some important ways, first experiences in learning to teach reading are like first experiences in learning to drive a car. The new teacher has been in a school and the new driver has been in a car, but neither has been in control. Acquiring background knowledge by reading the manual or textbook is important to learning both skills, but the classroom work cannot replace hands-on experience. When I was learning to drive, I completed a course in driver's education, yet it was my father who actually taught me the skill by being there as I practiced with his car. My most impressionable moment was when I drove too close to a person riding a bicycle on our neighborhood street. My father had me pull the car over and impressed upon me how small and vulnerable a bicycle rider is compared to a huge, intimidating car. I remember that lesson every time I steer clear of a bicyclist on the road.

Shefelbine and Hollingsworth's (1987) study of preservice teachers' instructional decisions during a reading practicum addressed the relationship between first experiences and the development of skill in reading instruction. All of the 14 undergraduate students who were the subjects in their study had particularly difficult first experiences with diagnosis, planning, and teaching word recognition. The authors concluded that "mastery of basic instructional routines [should be] a prerequisite to more complex instructional procedures and decisions" (p. 41). Instead of assuming that all practice in teaching leads to mastery, teacher educators should closely monitor what preservice teachers actually learn from first teaching experiences.

First experiences in teaching reading are important because they affect how the concepts that contribute to a teacher's instructional abilities are represented in that teacher's schema. Mark Conley (1984) explained that "as preservice teachers become practicing teachers, their experiences in conducting classroom lessons could confirm or conflict with earlier concept representations" (p. 132). For example, many preservice teachers might understand that setting a purpose before reading can improve a reader's comprehension. Successful first experiences in setting purposes would likely strengthen a preservice teacher's schema of the utility of purpose setting, while unsuccessful first experiences could hinder the continued representation of this concept.

The beginning stage of development of teachers' schema for instruction is also important to study because novice teachers have been viewed as "blank slates" upon which to inscribe the practices and principles that effective teachers use. For example, in describing preservice teachers in the semester before student teaching, Fuller (1969) explained their teacher-related concerns were "usually amorphous and vague: anticipation or apprehension" (p. 219), and Calderhead (1989) has stated that student teachers "lack a language for talking about teaching" (p. 46).

Borko, Lalik, and Tomchin (1987) explained that effective teaching research is often employed in teacher education programs on the premise that novice teachers can adopt the routines and actions of expert teachers, although there are significant differences in the thinking and actions of experts and novices. Far from finding preservice teachers to be "blank slates" in their conceptions of successful instruction, Borko et al. found that novice (student) teachers had a multidimensional conception, encompassing many aspects of the teaching/learning process. Their findings were the result of analyzing 14 student teachers' descriptions of successful and unsuccessful lessons. The four most prominent features of novice teachers' conceptions of successful teaching were (1) instructional uniqueness (i.e., supplementing the standard curriculum with creative activities), (2) student affect, (3) student involvement and participation, and (4) student learning. Ellwein, Graue, and Comfort's (1990) study of 47 student teachers' verbal descriptions of successful and unsuccessful lessons confirmed conclusions drawn by Borko et al. that novice teachers held multidimensional conceptions of instruction. They found that no one element of instruction accounted for a lesson's outcome, although some appeared with greater regularity.

The present study attempted to extend this line of inquiry by focusing on preservice teachers' conceptions of successful instruction during their first experience in teaching a directed reading lesson. It differs from previous studies in that the subjects in this study were preservice teachers in a reading methods course for secondary education majors, taken in most cases a full year before engaging in a student teaching or reading practicum experience.

## METHOD

### Procedure

Ninety-two secondary education majors in a reading methods course engaged in a microteaching activity designed to provide practice in using techniques associated with the directed reading activity. Although the occasion of this initial reading course provided the preservice teachers with their first experience in teaching reading, many of them reported that the activity was their first experience in teaching anything. The microteaching format enabled each preservice teacher to teach a 30-minute lesson to a group of five peers in a room where the lesson could be videotaped.

Each lesson employed an adaptation of the directed reading activity (DRA) for use with a content area text. The DRA in this study consisted of three phases, each incorporating specific instructional techniques. In the first phase, eliciting prior knowledge, the techniques were asking divergent questions, getting all students involved, and receiving but not judging student responses. Techniques emphasized in the second phase of the DRA, setting a purpose for reading (followed by silent reading), were using eye contact to elicit student attention and using clear speech to deliver a concise purpose statement. The third phase, postreading discussion, employed several questioning techniques. These included asking a first question reflecting the purpose for reading, asking inference questions and text verification questions, asking many students to respond to one question, and praising students for their thought processes. The texts used by the preservice teachers varied with their content area interests. English teachers used Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, science teachers used Lewis Thomas' *Lives of a Cell*, foreign language teachers used a Spanish, French, or German language version of Antoine de Saint Exupery's *The Little Prince*, and social studies teachers used J.L. Collier's *My Brother Sam Is Dead.*

Within a week after the microteaching activity, each preservice teacher viewed the videotape of his or her lesson and wrote responses to several questions designed to elicit reflection about the teaching experiences. The question most relevant to this study was: What was successful about your lesson?

### Analysis

Each of the 92 preservice teachers' written responses to the question was analyzed using taxonomic analysis (Spradley, 1979), which seeks to illustrate sets and subsets of relational meanings held by a group. In this study, taxonomic analysis was used to illustrate relationships among components of meaning the preservice teachers had for the concept of successful instruction within a directed reading activity.

The analysis began by listing all the preservice teachers' responses to the question: What was successful about your lesson? To create a tentative taxonomy, the first analysis used as categories the three parts of a DRA: eliciting prior knowledge, setting a purpose, and discussing the reading. Next, the preservice teachers' responses were searched again for larger, more inclusive domains. New categories emerged from the terms and phrases they used to describe their success with one of the three parts of a DRA, and a new taxonomy was created. Finally, the number of preservice teachers whose responses indicated agreement with a category of meaning was counted, and percentages were calculated.

## RESULTS

The first taxonomic analysis revealed that most preservice teachers began their description of what was successful about their lesson by identifying one of the three parts of a directed reading activity. Since some responses did not name one of these parts, a no-part-mentioned category was added to the initial taxonomy, shown in Table 1 with percentages of the preservice teachers who made each response.

Since almost one-third of the preservice teachers did not mention one of the parts of a DRA to describe what was successful about the lesson, the responses were analyzed again to search for more inclusive domains. Nearly all of the preservice teachers who named a part of the DRA as successful also wrote additional comments explaining or describing the successful part of the lesson. These additional descriptive comments were very similar to comments written by the preservice teachers who did not name a specific part of the DRA as successful. A new set of categories emerged from the similarity of descriptions of successful teaching. Table 2 illustrates the revised taxonomy that was created.

To illustrate the degree to which the preservice teachers shared components of meaning regarding successful teaching, the number of preservice teachers whose responses indicated agreement with a category of meaning was counted, and percentages were calculated. The results, shown in Table 3, show that at least one-third of the teachers indicated that positive student response, the use of good questioning techniques, and good questions were components of successful teaching. Fewer teachers mentioned good topic choice as a component of successful teaching. Eleven percent of the preservice teachers identified other components of successful teaching that did not relate to these four categories.

**TABLE 1**
**Preservice Teachers' Conception of a Successful Directed Reading Activity**

| Categories | *N* | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Eliciting prior knowledge | 41 | 45 |
| Setting a purpose | 4 | 4 |
| Discussion after reading | 18 | 19 |
| No part mentioned | 29 | 32 |

**TABLE 2**
**Revised Taxonomy of Conceptions of Successful Teaching**

| Categories | Subsets |
|---|---|
| Positive student response | students talked most of the time |
| | students used examples |
| | students responded well |
| | discussion went beyond my expectations |
| | the conversation flowed |
| | everyone was involved |
| | they cited from the text |
| Good questions | my questions were good |
| | I improvised questions in response to student comments and answers |
| | my questions elicited personal comments |
| | my questions generated new thoughts |
| | my questions were clearly stated |
| | my questions relate to the readings well |
| | my questions were divergent |
| Good questioning techniques | good wait time |
| | making eye contact with students |
| | I gave positive feedback |
| | my listening to students |
| | my drawing out longer responses |
| | my interest in student responses |
| | I rephrased questions |
| | I accepted student responses |
| Good topic for lesson | name of particular topic |
| Other | my confidence and charisma |
| | my enthusiasm |
| | I moved around a lot |
| | I was well organized |
| | I was not nervous |

**TABLE 3**
**Percentages of Responses by Category**

| Categories | Percentage* |
|---|---|
| Positive student response | 39 |
| Good questioning techniques | 36 |
| Good questions | 33 |
| Good topic choice | 10 |
| Other | 11 |

* > 100% because preservice teachers could identify more than one component.

## DISCUSSION

The findings in this study confirmed the results of two studies that indicated that novice teachers have a multidimensional conception of successful teaching encompassing many aspects of the teaching/learning process. Two of the most prominent features of novice teachers' conceptions of successful teaching in the Borko et al. (1987) study were instructional uniqueness, that is, supplementing the standard curriculum with creative activities and student involvement and participation. Preservice teachers in the present study demonstrated similar conceptions by describing their ability to improvise good questions and students' involvement in discussions as components of a successful lesson. This study also supported the finding of Ellwein et al. (1990) that many novice teachers are "self-referencing," giving greater emphasis to their own role than the students' role in the success of a lesson. Preservice teachers in the present study identified the teacher's role in composing and asking good questions, using good questioning techniques, and choosing a good lesson topic, among a few other personal characteristics, as components of a successful lesson.

One developmental model of teacher concerns (Fuller, 1969; Fuller & Bown, 1975) suggests that before their very first teaching experience, most preservice teachers are not concerned with the specifics of teaching; they are, in essence, "blank slates." This study shows that in regard to their conceptions of what constitutes a successful lesson, preservice teachers are definitely not blank slates. While the taxonomy in Table 2 provides an illustration of how concepts contributing to teachers' instructional abilities may be represented in preservice teachers' schemata, the percentages of preservice teachers who expressed each concept provides additional insight.

The Fuller model predicts that preservice teachers will frame their reflections about their first teaching experiences in terms of self-adequacy, the primary concern of the early teaching phase. In this study, only 11 percent of the preservice teachers identified a personal characteristic of the "self" such as their charisma, enthusiasm, or their lack of nervousness as a key to success. In contrast, more than one-third of the preservice teachers cited the specifics of teaching, good questions, and good questioning techniques in describing what was successful about their teaching. Furthermore, the highest percentage of preservice teachers, 39%, identified positive student responses as a component of successful teaching. Concern with student response, in the Fuller model, is associated with experienced or superior teachers.

Because this study was not intended to reconceptualize the stages of teacher development, no new model can be created. However, results suggest that preservice teachers can learn very quickly and very early in their professional development to think like expert teachers. Over one-third (36%) of the preservice teachers described their use of good questioning techniques as successful elements of their lessons. The questioning techniques they cited, such as wait time, using positive feedback, making eye contact, probing, and active listening, are frequently cited in the professional literature (e.g., Brophy & Good, 1986) as behavior characteristics of expert teachers. To say that preservice teachers can learn very quickly and very early in their professional development to think like expert teachers is not the same as saying that all preservice teachers will learn to think in this way. This was also the concern of Borko et al. (1987), who noted that "attempts to educate novice teachers by presenting them with information about how expert teachers think and act... may be insufficient" (p. 78).

These results suggest that the nature of a preservice teacher's first experience in teaching may be an important factor in the development of teaching thinking. In this study, the first teaching experience was a structured, safe, and reflective microteaching activity that helped preservice teachers develop a schema for teaching, which in many cases resembled that of an expert teacher. Research that investigates the relationship of other first experiences in teaching and preservice teachers' conceptions of successful teaching would be an important next step in understanding the development of teacher thinking.

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# The Impact of Coursework in Tests and Measurements on Assessment Literacy

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Accountability has become a popular and widespread concept in our nation's schools (Costa, 1989). Resolutions adopted by the International Reading Association note that one purpose of assessment is to address accountability concerns. Standardized tests seem to figure prominently as measures of student achievement and the overall quality of America's schools. Some educators (Alexander, 1991) argue for an American Achievement Test "which would give every community a chance, for the first time, to see whether their kids were learning to world-class standards" (p. 11A). Others have opposed a national test (Hayes, 1991), arguing that the knowledge base to create such a test simply does not exist. Whether or not a national test becomes a reality, there is general agreement that standardized tests are widely used and frequently accepted as valid measures of educational accomplishment (Haladyna, Nolen, & Haas, 1991).

Leaving aside the debatable question of whether standardized tests are indeed valid measures of achievement, most educators, and especially tests and measurements specialists, agree that appropriate conditions must be satisfied if achievement test data are to be useful (Stiggins, 1991). These "appropriate conditions," part of what has been called assessment literacy (Stiggins, 1991), include sound, proper, and ethical assessment practices in test preparation and administration. Hills (1991) argues that teachers may not know or attend to ethical assessment practices because of a lack of training. Four such practices include (1) recognizing that standardized tests are not given in the same manner as teacher-made tests, (2) reading the directions of standardized tests out of the manual, (3) not including actual material from standardized tests in test-wiseness programs, and (4) not instructing students in the subject matter of standardized tests if it isn't part of the regular curriculum. Inappropriate practices such as those mentioned above may lead to test score pollution (Haladyna, Nolen, & Haas, 1991) and greatly reduce the confidence that can be placed in the resulting scores.

The claim that teachers and other school personnel are inadequately trained in assessment has a base of research support. Stiggins (1991) reports that "a vast majority of the 50 states require no explicit training in assessment as part of teacher certification" (p. 535). He also believes that such programs often fail to provide the needed knowledge and skills. A study on the assessment training requirements of 27 teacher education programs (both undergraduate and graduate) that produce 75% of all teachers trained in the Pacific Northwest revealed that only 6 of the 27 programs required measurement courses (Stiggins, Conklin, & Bridgeford, 1986).

Given the importance of sound, proper, and ethical test administration practices, a study was undertaken to investigate the possible impact of tests and measurements courses on selected assessment knowledge that deals with test preparation and administration. The data in the present study used four items from an earlier study by VanLeirsburg and Johns (1991) and 197 new subjects who responded to the same four items.

## METHOD

### Subjects

A total of 446 subjects participated in the present study: 130 preservice teachers and 316 inservice teachers. The 130 preservice teachers were enrolled in reading methods courses at a large midwestern university and had no teaching experience. In terms of coursework in tests and measurements, 47 of the subjects reported no coursework; 83 subjects indicated that they had one or more courses. The 316 inservice teachers were enrolled in graduate reading courses at the same midwestern university. The majority of these subjects (N = 274) had taken one or more tests and measurements courses The remaining 42 subjects had no such courses. Among all subjects, 357 had one or more tests and measurements course. Only 89 (about 20%) had not taken a tests and measurements course.

### Questionnaire Items

Four of 11 items from an earlier survey (VanLeirsburg & Johns, 1991) were selected for analysis because they concerned knowledge regarding test preparation and administration. Subjects were asked to mark their responses to the items. Response choices were on a continuum that included "strongly agree," "agree," "undecided or uncertain," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." The items were then rated using a Likert scale.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The four survey items and mean scores for the two groups are shown in the table. Because the possible impact of coursework in tests and measurements was the central focus of this study, preservice and inservice teachers were divided by the presence or absence of at least one tests and measurements course. The method of analysis was a series of one-way ANOVAs.

A visual inspection of the data reveals some trends along with the statistically significant results. Those subjects with one or more courses in tests and measurements had mean scores indicating more knowledge of the ethics of assessment than subjects who had no such courses.

The four survey items helped determine whether coursework in tests and measurements impacts assessment literacy. Statistical analyses for each of the four survey items revealed that such coursework was associated with significantly more knowledge. The tests for significance tell part of the story; the means give another indication of the magnitude of knowledge. Unfortunately, the mean scores tend to suggest that assessment knowledge measured by the four items on the survey is somewhat tentative and uncertain.

**TABLE**
**Mean Responses to Selected Assessment Literacy Concepts Based on Coursework in Tests and Measurements**

| | Group | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Survey Items | No Courses | Coursework | Significance |
| 1. Standardized tests should be given in the same manner as teacher-made tests.<br>1 = strongly agree | 2.49 (1.00) | 2.75 (1.11) | $p \leq .047$ |
| 2. Teachers should read the directions of standardized tests directly out of the teacher's manual.<br>1 = strongly agree | 3.17 (1.06) | 3.74 (1.17) | $p \leq .001$ |
| 3. Test-wiseness programs should include material from the actual standardized tests to be taken by students.<br>1 = strongly agree | 2.93 (0.98) | 3.25 (1.14) | $p \leq .031$ |
| 4. Students should be instructed in the subject matter of specific standardized tests even if it isn't part of the regular curriculum.<br>1 = strongly agree | 2.59 (1.15) | 3.03 (1.27) | $p \leq .001$ |

With regard to test administration procedures (survey items 1 and 2), Gronlund (1985) notes that standardized tests should not be given in the same manner as teacher-made tests. In addition, measurement experts agree that the very nature of a standardized test means that the same directions should be read to all students. Thus, reading directions from the manual of such tests is vital if the resulting scores are to be interpreted meaningfully. The statistical findings support the notion that the average responses for subjects with at least one tests and measurements course demonstrated greater knowledge in these areas. Practically speaking, however, the magnitude of that knowledge was not as great as might be expected, given the fundamental nature of the test administration procedures being investigated.

For test-wiseness preparation concepts (items 3 and 4), the statistical findings again favored the group that had taken at least one tests and measurements course. This group's mean score, however, revealed general uncertainty when evaluated on the Likert scale (3 = uncertain).

Test-wiseness programs generally include instructing students in the mechanics of testing and the types of items that compose a test. Taking class time to instruct students in relaxing and responding may help them better their scores as they apply these skills to all content domains. Test-wiseness programs are generally considered ethical and beneficial although material from actual standardized tests should not be used in the instruction of test-taking skills (Anastasi, 1988). Using actual test items or specific material from a test will cause the score to become an invalid measure, not representative of the student's actual knowledge (Gronlund, 1985). As schools have begun to "teach to the tests," the test scores have become even poorer measures of students' overall abilities (Darling-Hammond, 1991).

There is a distinction between teaching test-wiseness and coaching (Ritter & Idol-Maestas, 1986). Test-wiseness is considered the instruction of test-taking skills that may be applied to many types and domains of testing. Coaching, instruction in the specific content being measured, serves to inflate a student's score, not allowing measurement of actual achievement. Inflated scores are not true measures of a student's achievement when compared to the norming population.

Standardized tests are used at all levels of schooling, and educators must possess a sound knowledge of basic standardized testing procedures and be able to apply that knowledge. The ethical considerations of teaching test-wiseness as opposed to coaching for a specific test must also be understood in order to maintain the validity and integrity of tests. An awareness of the strengths and limitations of these testing tools is essential for all educators. Assessment literacy should be included in the education of teachers and administrators. The subjects' general uncertainty about most of the items in this survey, despite the fact that a majority had taken a tests and measurements course, suggests that the content of such courses may need to be reexamined.

Mehrens and Kaminski (1989) developed a seven-point continuum of ethical and unethical practices currently used to prepare students to take standardized tests:

1. General instruction on the objectives of the curriculum.
2. Instruction on test-taking skills.
3. Instruction on objectives generated by looking at the objectives measured by a variety of standardized tests.
4. Instruction on objectives specifically matching the skills involved in the standardized test to be used.
5. Instruction on specifically matched skills in which instruction follows the same item format as the test questions.
6. Practice on a parallel form of the test to be used.
7. Practice on the actual tests to be used.

Practices 1 and 2 are typically considered ethical and advisable; practices 6 and 7 are highly unethical. Practices 3, 4, and 5 detail testing preparation practices that border on the unethical.

Of concern is the general level of uncertainty regarding assessment concepts among many of the subjects in our study. With the pervasive and increasing use of standardized tests, both preservice and inservice teachers must increase their assessment literacy in order to administer standardized tests ethically and correctly, prepare students to take tests, and make informed decisions about test scores. The findings from our study offer some evidence that subjects with at least one course in tests and measurements are more knowledgeable about certain assessment principles than those without such training.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In preservice teacher education programs where a tests and measurements course is not required, such a course should be developed or important assessment principles should be incorporated in methods courses. Based on our findings, coursework could include, but certainly not be limited to, these principles:

1. Teacher-made and standardized tests have differences.
2. Standardized procedures must be followed to ensure score validity.
3. General test-wiseness skills may be taught in order to improve general testing performance.
4. Unethical practices include instructing in specific test content, using actual items from the test, and coaching.

Inservice teachers would benefit from attention to these points as well. Staff development programs could help to improve the assessment literacy of educational professionals.

Second, professionals who teach courses in assessment ought to ensure that attention is devoted to ethical dimensions of test preparation and administration.

Based on our study, a general uncertainty among subjects who had taken at least one tests and measurements course regarding most of the assessment principles investigated was clearly evident. Perhaps what is needed is a careful content analysis of existing measurement courses. The need may be for better and more focused courses, not simply more courses.

Third, Stiggins (1991) notes a bleak picture of assessment literacy among those filling positions in educational leadership. Most states do not require explicit training in assessment as a part of teacher certification. Further, when assessment training is offered to teachers, it falls short of providing the information necessary to produce assessment literates. "To complete this picture, those trained to become administrators are often trained less well in basic assessment than are the teachers whose work they are supposed to supervise" (Stiggins, 1991, p. 535). News headlines have reported that a principal was suspended amid allegations that "she told teachers to cheat on achievement tests in order to inflate pupil scores" (Silverman & Jacobs, 1991, p. 1).

Fourth, school systems may need to take the lead in developing explicit policies for what is expected among the professional staff regarding standardized assessments. Haladyna, Nolen, and Haas (1991) point out that standardized achievement test scores have become the operational definition for educational achievement. Pressures to raise test scores at all costs are great, resulting in what has been referred to as a pollution of test scores. Two major practices have contributed to this pollution: how public schools prepare students to take standardized tests and nonstandard practices and conditions under which tests are administered (Haladyna, Nolen, & Haas, 1991).

Additional research might explore preservice and inservice teachers separately along with the number of tests and measurements courses taken. Subjects with more than one such course may be more knowledgeable than those who had only one course. Further research might also explore the nature of the measurement courses that the subjects had taken.

Sound instruction in general test-taking procedure and test-wiseness programs can improve the assessment literacy of educators and also result in more valid test scores. We believe that leaders in schools need to carefully consider both the implicit and explicit messages that are communicated to the professional staff regarding high stakes assessments. What may be needed is a clearly articulated set of ethical principles that are put into practice. The seven-point continuum (Mehrens & Kaminski, 1989) cited earlier in this study may be a useful starting point for educational leaders who wish to pursue both ethical and practical considerations when trying to improve the validity of standardized test scores.

For educators to become good consumers of test data, the task of preparing teachers and administrators to become literate in dealing with assessment issues and tools is critical. The time has come to improve and increase assessment literacy. At the very least, coursework in assessment and inservice programs should deal with areas of concern raised in this study. The larger task would be for teachers and administrators to reduce the gap between this knowledge and actual practice.

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